This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Digitized by Google

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
F THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MRS. HANNAH MORE.

Digitized by Google

SEELEYS, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MRS. HANNAH MORE:

BY WILLIAM ROBERTS, ESQ.

THIRD EDITION;
REVISED, WITH AN ADDITIONAL PREFACE.

VOL. IV.

PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE:
AND SOLD BY L. B. SEELEY AND SONS,
FLEET STREET, LONDON.
MDCCCXXXV.

Digitized by Google

add to lib

GIFT

Digitized by Google

940
M835
R64
1835
v.4

MEMOIRS.

PART IV.

(CONTINUED,)

FROM A. D. 1802 TO A. D. 1828.

M615290
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS.

PART IV.

CHAPTER VIII.

TOWARDS the close of this year the universal stagnation of trade and depression of agriculture, afforded too plausible an occasion to ill-intentioned men, for perverting the minds of the working people, irritated by the disappointment of their ill-founded expectation that plenty would be the immediate attendant upon peace, and by the severe distress consequent upon the general scarcity of employment. The services Mrs. More had already rendered to the cause of loyalty and subordination, by her skill and success in accommodating sober sense and sound reasoning to plain and plebeian understandings, in the form of narrative or dialogue, conveyed in the playful and popular style, occasioned fresh applications to be made to her from various quarters for her powerful assistance at this alarming juncture. Without a moment's hesitation, she set

Digitized by Google

to work, and with her usual celerity produced several appropriate and admirable tracts and ballads, which she continued to supply while the pressure of the danger existed, and which were circulated in great numbers throughout every part of the country with very visible effect. Those who called upon her for this fresh public effort, were surprised at the sudden success of their application, and beheld with astonishment the rapid succession of these little pieces that flowed from the pen of this ready writer, and the zeal and animation she displayed in the cause, stricken now as she was with years, and shattered by repeated sickness. A committee was formed, as on a former occasion in London, to accelerate the circulation of these seasonable publications; with the leading members of which she maintained a correspondence, that drew from her many communications of practical and experimental wisdom. Her admirable little dialogue of Village Politics was now reprinted, and several editions of it were circulated, under the title of Village Disputants.

We cannot give a livelier picture of the zeal and alacrity with which she entered into the cause, than by inserting a letter received from her at this period.

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

1817.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

'The creature's at her dirty work again.' This tract, written with a weak head and a weak hand, calls in upon you on its way to London. Pray read

Digitized by Google

over carefully, with a pen in your hand, what was written hastily and in pain, and correct any tautologies, &c. which through hurry may have escaped me. I went to work too soon, which brought on a return of fever, but am better again. It is grievous that they have so identified me with the cause, as to have put my yet unpublished song at the end. Though I have little to hope or to fear in this world, I do not wish my name to be bandied about. Poor W——'s conscience may be set at rest about the tracts he bought for us. I read to my sisters about six lines; but they were so disturbed that they would not hear another word — Sally was even agitated painfully. There it stopt, and nothing, no not even the wish to answer, could make me wade through another line of such unparalleled blasphemy. Is there no power in magistrates to punish the venders?

Last night arrived my ten songs (new and altered) for correction. They have all wooden cuts. I have sent you my '*Farthing*,'[1] which I fear you will not think a farthing's worth; and I hope you have likewise received a visit from Mr. James Dawson,[2] and that he is now on his travels to his native air, Spitalfields.

An admirable letter from Sir Thomas Acland! he has canvassed the whole county from house to house. How *delightful*, when this shall be done *every year!* He says, 'pebbles or bullets' is now the only subject of discussion. I shall send next

[1] The title of one of the ballads.

[2] The hero of the tract called the Delegate.

Digitized by Google

Saturday for your edification and delectation the very profoundly learned and deeply tragical history of Mr. Fantom, or rather the death of that eminent patriot. If you can assemble the Fords as soon as you get it, I shall be glad of the remarks of the whole party; it has been scribbled with more hurry than suits so *eminent* a work—tell Miss Eliza Ford, that being invited to this lecture, is but poor payment for her beautiful present received yesterday, of two sweet drawings of Barley Wood. Lord K—— has sent 600 Village Disputants to six gentlemen at Manchester for distribution, in their separate districts. I shall now stop my hand, feeling exhausted, and not having had an hour's time even to read the British Review, except one or two articles; the Byron subject is admirable, but the twelfth page is so remarkably good, sound, and powerfully written, that I read it twice over before I went on. I still cry with King Henry,

'Oh gentle sleep! how have I frightened thee?'

I believe I should be better if I had nothing to do, yet I would say with Cato,

'While I yet live, let me not live in vain!'

You will say I might have quoted a more Christian-like authority. Patty is remanded back to her room, and I fear to her bed, with a great increase of fever; her chest so bad, that she is reduced to a whisper. Sally's leg gives her great pain: her fortitude, strength, and spirits, are really astonish-

Digitized by Google

ing; I pray God to give us all grace to bear our different infirmities with entire submission to his will. We cannot expect them at our age to decrease, but it may please infinite mercy to soften them, and to make them eventually blessings. God bless you both.

Your's ever very affectionately,

H. More.

From H. R. H. the Princess Sophia of Gloucester to Mrs. H. More.

Bagshot Park, Jan. 21.

My dear Mrs. More,

I am truly sensible of your kind attention in sending your *capital* little work to me, called 'Cheap Repository Tracts,' which has amused as much as it has charmed me; and I particularly delight in the manner in which you endeavour to impress upon your readers of all ranks, the *inestimable* value of our *free government*, and of the *equality of all before* the laws—a blessing only to be found in this favoured country, and of which we are insensible, through ignorance and inconsideration. Indeed it is impossible not to tremble when we recollect that we appear to have arrived at the *acme* of success and glory! for we cannot hope to be the only exception to the general rule, of declining after reaching the summit of distinction.

Allow me to offer the assurance of my best wishes and prayers for your preservation, which the com-

Digitized by Google

mencement of another year occasions me to renew, and believe me,

My dear Mrs. More,

Your very affectionate,

SOPHIA MATILDA.

My brother is enchanted with your last work, which he has just been reading, and the Duchess of Gloucester and myself are perusing the Tracts at present.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

Barley Wood, Jan. 24, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am resolved at least to *begin* a letter to you; whether I shall be able to end it so readily, I know not. I am recovering slowly from a bilious fever. One of my sisters, I fear, is declining fast. I pray for resignation to the divine will, in this, as in all his dispensations.

And now let me thank you, as I do most cordially, for your very liberal benefaction to our distressed poor. We have had indeed peculiarly trying scenes, especially in two parishes on the Mendip Hills, where I have had for twenty-eight years a very large school; this not only gives me an intimate acquaintance with the state of these villages, but a peculiar interest in them. They are all miners, all poor, and all have been unable to earn a penny;—the material they subsist upon,—*lapis calaminaris,* with which brass is made,—lying upon hand without any call for it; so that industry was

Digitized by Google

of no use. After assisting them individually to the utmost of our power, my friend and neighbour Mr. H. Addington and myself have commenced merchants, and purchase a certain quantity of their commodity weekly, which is deposited in a warehouse till better times return, and both their minds and bodies are improved by having employment as well as bread. I am labouring hard to prevail on the *real* merchants to renew the trade by the time our private funds are exhausted; the distress of these eleven hundred souls has been exquisite. I condemn you to this tedious detail, that you may see how acceptable your bounty must needs be.

Your history of yourself and your family interests me in the highest degree. God has indeed crowned you with blessings, one of the chief of which is a heart sensibly alive to his mercies, and overflowing with gratitude to the great Giver! May He multiply upon you his spiritual blessings, which will remain with us when all earthly comforts fail. Happy those who have learnt their value!

I have not seen the book you mention, but agree with you that no degree of wit can atone for a profane application of Scripture. My own reading never was so limited. Old age in bringing me its infirmities, does not bring with them that leisure and repose which should seem to belong to them. Till I was completely laid by with this illness, we have been seldom without company.

Among our inmates this winter have been the Bishop of Gloucester, who, living much at his deanery at Wells, is a kind of neighbour—Mr. Wilberforce,

Digitized by Google

Lord Calthorpe, &c. Dr. Miller of Trinity College, Dublin, has sent me his valuable work on the Philosophy of History. There are only two volumes published. His plan includes eight, so that I shall not live to see his idea fully developed. John Bowdler's father has sent me the two posthumous volumes of his incomparable son. He was indeed made wise unto salvation. I hope you will see them. It is a pity they are not intended to be made public. They abound in piety and good feeling.

Dr. Young somewhere says, 'I've been so long remembered, I'm forgot.' That this may not be quite the case with me, Cadell has just published a new edition of all my early Poems, to match with my other volumes. I have sent a little vignette, which will serve to bring me and my habitation to the memory of my friends, when I shall be no more. I have ordered Hatchard by the inclosed, to send you a copy for your eldest son, that he may have the gratification of reading his father's name in the *Bas Bleu*.

I received two days ago from Paris, a smart visitor, dressed out in the costume of a French aristocrat. I give you his style and title as it stands: '*Cœlebs ou le Choix d'une Epouse, Roman Moral, Par Mad. H. More. Traduit de L'Anglois. En 2 tomes, oct.*' What say you to Monsieur Cœlebs? For my own part, I do not think this plain Westmoreland Squire can ever suit the meridian of Paris.

And now shall I confess how low I have been sinking in the ranks of literature? I did not think to turn ballad-monger in my old age. But the

Digitized by Google

strong and urgent representations I have had from the highest quarters of the very alarming temper of the times, and the spirit of revolution which shews itself more or less in all manufacturing towns, has led me to undertake as a duty a task I should gladly have avoided. I have written many songs, papers, &c. by way of antidote to this fatal poison. Thousands and tens of thousands have been circulated without its being known from what source they proceeded. As to some of them, my quiet, perhaps my safety requires silence, where obnoxious names are mentioned. These, I propose, some of them at least, to have expunged in a future edition. I send you a few specimens. The Village Disputants has been long known to be mine. I have accommodated this tract to the present times. Hatchard prints them.

I will not keep back this scrawl any longer, but send it with all its dulness on its head.

I have had many loud calls for preparation for another world this summer. Death has exceedingly thinned the ranks of my friends. I have seemed to live among the tombs. Besides a sister of my own, I have had to lament two as dear to me as relations; Mr. Hoare of Mitcham Grove, and Mrs. Stephen, sister of Mr. Wilberforce, and wife of Mr. James Stephen, (of whom I cannot speak in terms too high,) who, I believe succeeded you in the Chancery Court. Over these and many others, I have deeply mourned; I have not however sorrowed as those who have no hope, for they are in their proper home.

Adieu! my very dear friend. If we are not

Digitized by Google

allowed to meet any more in this world, may we meet again in that perfect state where there is neither sin, sickness, or sorrow. With my kindest respects to Lady P. believe me ever,

Most faithfully your's,

H. More.

From Sir W. W. Pepys to Mrs. M. More.

1817.

What you say, my dear friend, of the long list of friends and acquaintance who have gone before us, operates strongly upon me to pray daily that I may be prepared for my latter end, and that I may "die the death of the righteous." I had the melancholy curiosity a year or two ago to make out a list from 'Boswell's Life of Johnson,' of those mentioned in that work with whom I had been acquainted, and who are now no more; it was a long list indeed! I thank you for telling me that the 46th was Luther's favourite psalm. The older I grow, the more is my admiration of those divine compositions increased; and I feel deeply the wish of good Bishop Horne, that, whenever death comes, it may find my mind adapted to the perusal and relish of them. As my long-continued prosperity has made gratitude the prevailing sentiment of my heart, the 103rd and the 145th are most frequently in my mouth, especially since I read somewhere that the ancient Hebrews had a tradition that a man could not fail to secure a place in heaven, if he would repeat to himself the latter part of those psalms every day. You who are perhaps better able to judge than I am, will I

Digitized by Google

dare say agree with me that nothing in ancient literature is at all comparable to those psalms, even as human compositions; what is Pindar to the 139th among others!

The work on 'The Philosophy of History' is, from the subject, very tempting. I have not yet seen it, but wish much that some excellent writer would strip such characters as Buonaparte of the false lustre which encircles him, and prevents mankind from beholding them in their genuine deformity;—

> 'Dash the proud tyrant from his gilded car,
> Bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star.'

But while historians continue to write of kings and warriors in the same way as the vulgar talk of them, there is no hope that mankind will ever be cured of that feeling which a poor Frenchman once expressed to me, when I was declaring my concern for the hurt which he had received from being run over by a carriage—'*C'étoit pourtant la voiture de quelque grand Seigneur.*'

I wonder whether your grave and serious pursuits have entirely destroyed in you that relish for pleasantry, though a little foolish, which you once possessed. If not, I would tell you, that on a question arising at the Regent's table, 'Which was considered in Europe as the higher title, the Dauphin or the Prince of Wales?' a gentleman answered that the question had been already decided by that famous line—

Quanto Delphinis Balæna Britannica Major.

Digitized by Google

'For you know, sir,' added he, 'that your royal highness is the Prince of Whales.' The addition you may reject as a pun, but the application of the line out of Juvenal was as quick and as clever as any thing I ever heard.

If you did but know what a sensation of unexpected delight I felt, at seeing your *well-known* hand, and finding that you still retained in the corner of your heart some remains of good-will for one who has had no opportunities of cultivating your good opinion, you would think, that among the many good deeds by which you stamp a value upon every passing day, the writing of that kind letter of your's was among the most benevolent.

Adieu, my dear friend, that every consolation and blessing may be granted to you, is the wish of

Your grateful and affectionate,

WILLIAM WELLER PEPYS.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

March 8, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

I know not what to say to you for your repeated bounty. "The liberal soul, (saith the prophet,) deviseth liberal things;" but really you *exceed* in liberality. May you be repaid with large interest, by him who hath said, "He that doeth it to one of the least of these, doeth it to me."

Most cordially do I participate in your feelings on the character, talents, and prosperity of your sons. To a young clergyman whose principles are estab-

Digitized by Google

lished, and whose habits are formed, the chaplainship of the Embassy at Paris may be a situation highly useful to others, as well as profitable to himself. But as there will be much good to be done, so there will be much evil to be resisted. Our old friend Edmund Burke said, that when vice loses all its grossness, it loses half its evil. I have always ventured to be of a directly contrary opinion. The drunken helots of Sparta were more likely to make youth sober, than the double-gilt vices of Paris. I pray God that your young gentleman may so preach and so live, as to adorn his Christian character, and to dignify his profession.

Of all the birds in the air, who should have reviewed the French Cœlebs, in the *Constitutionel* and other journals, but Madame de Stäel; whatever else she wants, she does not want candour, for she has returned my rather harsh treatment of her strange religious views, in the Essay on Saint Paul, with the most unqualified praise. I really did not deserve so much kindness at her hands.

Those who live with me, and see much of me, should answer your question, ' whether my serious pursuits have destroyed my relish for pleasantry.' As you cannot hear their testimony, you must trust to mine. I really can say that age, as far as I can judge, has in no degree subdued the natural gaiety of my temper, and I hope it is no infringement on better things, that my taste for humour, and a sort of sensible nonsense, is no whit diminished. I am thankful that a life of ill health has no ways impaired my constitutional

Digitized by Google

cheerfulness, and I am sometimes afraid that I take more than my share in society.

I have just received a present of a new *History of the Jesuits*, in answer to Dallas, in two vols. 8vo. and *Chalmers's Sermons on the Christian Revelation viewed in connexion with the Modern Astronomy:* the latter is said to contain passages of the sublimest eloquence, but I have not had time to look into either. Indeed I regret that I have no leisure for reading, when I had looked forward to old age as a period for doing nothing else. But we are not at our own disposal, and I am punished for my project.

I shall desire Hatchard to send a specimen of my very *profound* and *learned* halfpenny and penny lucubrations, as a present to your servant's hall, hoping, however, that you will condescend to cast an eye over some of them, yourself. In enumerating my occupations, I forgot to include one of the most elegant, that of furnishing the baskets of hawkers, with a hope of counteracting the blasphemous and seditious tracts which they carry about with too much success.

I am also pushing the Anti-Cobbett, a useful tract which I hope you recommend as an antidote to the Twopenny Register. The songs in the three first numbers, were written by your old friend the new ballad-monger.

These are awful times, my dear friend, and this tempestuous weather, by putting a stop to the sowing of corn, I fear is preparing for us another season of scarcity. But the Lord God omnipotent

Digitized by Google

reigneth; what a consolation to be assured of this!

Pray remember me most kindly to Lady Pepys, with my regards and best wishes to the younger branches.

Adieu, my dear friend, believe me with sincere attachment,

Your obliged and faithful,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Harford.

Barley Wood, April 21, 1817.

My dear Friend,

I am in your debt for two very entertaining and interesting letters, which even at this late date I must rather acknowledge than answer. I was much pleased to hear that the English at Rome had been assisting their poor countrymen in England. It was a handsome collection. It was not your fault if the attempt to promote the cause of the Bible Society was not equally successful. His Holiness, I see, has quite anathematized it. Your disappointment at not visiting the land of Homer and of Aristotle, must have been great, especially with such a Cicerone. Your kind present to *our* poor was very acceptable. The distress in one quarter has been peculiarly great, especially in two populous parishes where I have schools. They are all miners, and the almost entire stoppage of the great brass works reduced twelve hundred human creatures to absolute want. So I turned merchant myself; Mr. ——

Digitized by Google

and I set up trade, and have purchased a certain quantity of ore every week for three months; but I, not having, like my partner, a finger in the treasury, am compelled to stop, and he has stopped also. We have had all the winter, and still have, much domestic distress. Patty is in a weak languid state; and, alas! my poor sister Sarah is perhaps within a week or two of terminating her earthly course. My state is very anxious. I pray to God for grace to do and to *suffer* his whole will. The spirit of insurrection which has shewn itself in so alarming a way, especially in the blasphemous and seditious tracts which have deluged our whole country, called upon every lover of religion and social order to furnish some counteraction. I, for one, have set to work, and I think, in six or eight weeks I produced above a dozen of these halfpenny and penny compositions: I fear the antidotes are not powerful enough to expel the deeply-rooted venom, yet as they had a very wide circulation, my friends think they have been useful. I did not think to turn ballad-monger in my old age, but I thought it was my duty.

I have been reading 'Chalmer's Sermons;' it is quite the fashion to read and admire them. They are, upon scripture grounds, a refutation of the infidelity of modern astronomers. They contain passages of very splendid eloquence; and his work expands one's conceptions of the infinite benevolence as well as power of the Supreme Being.

This will be a dull letter to you, filled as your eyes and mind have long been with all that is great and interesting in nature and in art. I am

Digitized by Google

glad to hear that you are turning your thoughts towards your native country. Our most affectionate regards to Mrs. Harford.

Ever, my dear friend,

Affectionately your's

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Miss Roberts.

My dear Friend,

Your missionary narrative was very interesting, and quite fresh, for both the Bishop and Mr. Wilkes jilted us, and never called as they promised. I wish I had any thing as agreeable to send you in return. Poor Sally had been so much improved for two days, that if I had written yesterday, I should have made a good report, but she has been so very ill on this last night, as to alarm us much. I will not seal this till the last. Patty is at this moment suffering the bites of fifteen leeches on her chest, which is much inflamed.

Now for the *lesser casualties of Barley Wood.* The new maid scalded her leg as soon as she came; has been laid by near a fortnight, and another hired to do her work. The new man, in walking twenty-three miles to his new place, caught a sore throat, and has been confined. The old man, alias Jack Ragbag, as L—— calls John, is in bed with a lumbago. As I first descended from the parlour to the kitchen, I must now descend from the kitchen to the stable. The fine young horse Blucher, which cost forty-two guineas so lately, has been used but

Digitized by Google

once since you left us,—has now a fatal disease, and is never to be used again, but sold for nothing. I thought I had done, but no, a parish 'prentice has been sent to us, but not choosing to have more animals, we have paid eight pounds to be quit of her.

So much for domestic affairs, they are more wholesome than pleasant, yet how much worse might be the case, and I name them rather to amuse you with their accumulation, than to complain of them as singular or great.

I have at last got Wilkes's two volumes.[1] I think you will be much pleased with them,—good writing and great piety. I hope you will recommend them to some of your inquiring young friends.

We shall be ready and glad to receive you for as long as you please, when you give the word.

Your's affectionately,

H. More.

In the spring of 1817, by the death of Mrs. Sarah More, the eldest of the then surviving sisters, the family was again stricken. A companion was taken from them whose lively sallies of original wit had often made sorrow smile, and pain forget itself. But it was the lot of this intelligent, virtuous, and entertaining person, to linger long in an extremity of suffering rarely surpassed. Her vivacity combatted long with her pains, but her victory over them was the reward of her patient hope in her Redeemer, her disclaimer of all self-righteous

[1] Christian Essays,' by the Rev. Samuel Charles Wilkes.

Digitized by Google

grounds of consolation, and her humble trust in the purchased pardon of her God. Her bed of death was the scene of awful edification—the voice of ecstasy mingling with the cry of anguish—the flesh dissolving in pain, and the spirit departing in peace. She had, indeed, an earthly stay in Hannah, who let none of the supports or pledges of scripture-testimony be wanting to her dying sister, while her's was the hand to do all that could be done by human help to mitigate the last crisis.

The Christian magnanimity by which the departure of this valuable person was distinguished, has been recorded by a tender friend,[1] now the witness and partaker of her joy, who was constantly in her chamber during her last sickness. The particulars are very affecting, and will interest a large proportion of the readers of this work. It is an episode, however, which those who turn aside from scenes of patient suffering may easily pass over; though it is but honest to tell them that the more they strive to put away these thoughts to a more convenient season, the more terrific will be the form in which in the end they will be sure to present themselves.

'The last hours of our dear friend, Mrs S. More, afforded so wonderful a manifestation of the mercy and faithfulness of God, and of the efficacy of the Holy Spirit's operation, that I have felt it a solemn duty to set down as many of the particulars (too many have escaped) as I can recollect; both for my

[1] The elder of the two Miss Roberts's, since taken from her sorrowing relatives.

Digitized by Google

own edification, and for the consolation of those friends who are more peculiarly interested in this display of the power and goodness of the Lord.

'From a very slight indication which appeared about six months before her departure, she was able to anticipate the whole progress and fatal termination of her disorder, which she explained to a confidential servant, with a composure, and an acquiescence in the Divine will, truly admirable, and which never for a moment forsook her; adding at the same time, that not an hour of any day passed, in which she did not inwardly send up that supplication of the Litany, "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver me." It was a considerable time after the wound broke out in her leg, and began to wear a threatening appearance, before she permitted a groan, or any strong expression of suffering to escape her; and when at length they were extorted by agony, she seemed to reproach herself for them, as implying a departure from that submission and acquiescence for which she daily and earnestly prayed. At one time when she was sitting in the parlour under very sharp suffering, one of her sisters exclaimed, 'Poor Sally! you are in dreadful pain.' She answered, 'I am indeed, but it is all well.' She still for some time longer continued to enjoy the society of her friends, who were often deceived by the playfulness of her conversation, and the placidity of her manner, into the belief that the sad accounts which had been given of her situation were the exaggerations of affectionate alarm.

Digitized by Google

'While still so well as to be able in some degree to pursue her usual sedentary employments, she gave a striking proof how entirely she was withdrawing her mind from the things of this world, by refusing to have her chair placed near the bow window, from whence she could enjoy the sight of those plants and flowers which it had been her constant amusement and delight to cultivate, but from which she now turned with an expression of the completest indifference.

'At length it became impossible for her any longer to support a sitting position, and just before she was assisted up stairs for the last time, she threw a look all around her, evidently taking a mental farewell of the scene to which she had been so long accustomed, with an expression which though she uttered no word, was full of solemn meaning. The extremity and constancy of her sufferings, at length deprived her of the power of attending to a chain of reading which had hitherto been her chief delight and solace. To supply in some measure this loss, her sisters used to repeat from time to time, a few detached texts, in which she would constantly join with the greatest fervour. During the last two years of her life more especially, she had been so diligent and constant a reader of the Scriptures, as well as of other devotional books, that her mind had become completely imbued with them; and it was very remarkable, that in the moments of her sharpest pain, her attention was instantly excited, and her mind visibly comforted, if any by-stander recited a verse from the scripture, or a short

Digitized by Google

prayer, in which, even when unable to speak, she joined with deep fervour.

'One day, after she had lain some time in an almost insensible state, a friend tried her with a few texts of scripture; she suddenly burst forth, 'Can anything be finer than that? it quite makes one's face shine!' Towards the latter part of her illness, she asked one day to have a little girl in whom she was interested brought to her. She could only deliver herself in short sentences, but her words were 'God bless thee, my dear child; love God; serve God; love to pray to God more than to do any other thing.' One night she complained of too much light, adding that 'the smallest light was enough to die by.' Mrs. H. More asked her if she had comfort in her mind? 'Yes (she replied) I have no uncomfort at all.' She was then asked if she knew some friend that was in the room? 'Oh! yes, (she answered) I know every body and remember every thing.' 'Ah, poor dear soul, (said one of her attendants) she remembers her sufferings too!' 'No, (she answered in a tone of the most affecting resignation) I do not think of them.' When she was supposed to be very near her last hour, on her medical attendant wishing her a good morning, she raised her hands in a holy transport, exclaiming, 'Oh, for the glorious morning of the resurrection!—but there are some grey clouds between!' She then blessed him with all his family, and exhorted him to love God and to take care of his soul. 'Oh,' she exclaimed, 'if this should be the blessed hour of my deliverance, may I die the

Digitized by Google

death of the righteous, and may my last thoughts be thoughts of faithfulness!' The following day she awoke suddenly out of a tranquil sleep, crying out in a rapture, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto the Lamb—Hallelujah!" Another morning, when she was imagined to be in the very act of dying, recovering herself a little, she murmured out, 'When shall I come to these things—grace—mercy—peace!' She then asked for a little cold water, and turning her head towards a nurse who was attending her, 'do you know who it was that said, "A cup of cold water given in my name?"

'Again, in the intervals between her wanderings and the extremity of pain, she exclaimed incessantly, 'Oh, the blood of Christ! He died for me! God was man! May his blood be shed on me!' 'Lord, let the light of thy countenance shine upon me.' "When shall I appear before God?" And then half bewildered again, she cried out earnestly to her sister, 'Patty, *do* love the blessed God! Lord, shield me with the wings of thy love.' After a little interval, she said to Mrs. H. More, 'I hope I have had all my stripes; Lord! I am ready, finish the work!' On awaking in the afternoon, she again poured forth this ejaculation,—'Lord, look down upon me with the light of thy salvation; let thy Holy Spirit shine upon me. Look, O Lord! upon thy afflicted servant.' Somebody present saying to her, 'The Lord will release you, and take you out of your pain,' she seemed to fear, lest she had betrayed some impatience, and immediately

Digitized by Google

answered, 'Aye, in his own good time.' She then broke out into the Gloria Patri, and added, 'Lord, look down upon a poor penitent, humble, contrite sinner.'

'Nearly three days now passed, either in strong delirium, or total stupor, at the end of which time she became more composed, and, as at every other time, uttered no sentence in which supplication or praise was not mingled. Her chief cry on this day was for pardon and sanctification, and she charged her sisters to strive for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Her wanderings were frequent, but whether sensible or incoherent, calm or agitated, still the names of her God and her Saviour were constantly on her tongue.

Her sister asked her if she knew her, she answered, 'I know nobody but Christ.' In the evening of her last day but one, though scarcely able to articulate, she murmured out to those who stood around her, 'talk of the cross—the precious cross—the king of love.' On the morning of her blessed and quiet release from an earthly existence, though no longer able to swallow food, or discern any outward object, she was still enabled to give an evidence of the heavenly frame of her mind; a friend repeating to her that heart-sustaining assurance, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," she pronounced with a devout motion of her hands and eyes, "cleanseth," and a moment after, "Blessed Jesus!" and these were the last of her words that could be collected. It is scarcely necessary to repeat, after such a relation, that her whole conduct, during her conflict with this last enemy, was one

Digitized by Google

uniform and uninterrupted display (when she was in possession of her faculties,) of those fruits of the Spirit enumerated by the apostle, "Love, peace, meekness, long-suffering, faith:"—and it only remains for us to pray that our latter end may be like her's.'

From Mrs. H. More to Mrs. Kennicott.

1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

This is *May 24th*, and last night I received a note from you, dated March 28, saying you had sent the things I troubled you to get. The Bishop ascribes this delay of two months to a misdirection.

This day se'nnight my dear sister Sarah exchanged this sorrowful sinful world, for a world, I humbly trust, of everlasting happiness. Four months we had watched over her increasing disease; for the last two it far exceeded in agony any thing I ever witnessed. Poor Patty and I closely attended this bed of suffering, but our distresses were mingled with much consolation. This sprightly gay-tempered creature, whose vivacity age had not tamed, exhibited the most edifying spectacle I ever beheld. I cannot do justice to her humility, her patience, her submission. It was at times something almost *more* than resignation, it was a sort of spiritual triumph over the sufferings of her tormented body. She often said, 'I have never prayed for recovery, but for pardon. I do not fear death, but sin.' When she was *herself*, almost her whole time was spent in

Digitized by Google

prayer, or, what was still more affecting, in praise. Miss Roberts, who kindly came to us in our affliction, wrote down a sheet full of her sayings, replete with hope and faith. Owing to the immense quantity of laudanum she took, she was frequently in a kind of delirium, but the habit of pious thought was so confirmed, that even in that state she was always repeating broken portions of Psalms. She was earnestly desirous to depart and to be with Christ. For above a month, her leg was in a complete state of mortification, from below the knee to the toes. It seemed enclosed in a black boot. We were frequently roused in the night by her piercing groans, which she vainly endeavoured to restrain, fearing they would offend God. Our prayers for a gentle dissolution were granted: she expired in great tranquillity. May her example sink deep in the hearts of all who witnessed it. She commonly sent away her surgeon in tears. Patty and I have seen none of our friends since her death, though they constantly call at the door. I hope we shall now be able to get a little air, having been confined to the house since the middle of September last. Patty is in a weak declining state. I am better than in the winter. Pray for me that I may be enabled to *do* and to *suffer* the whole will of God. My three departed sisters have quitted the world in the same order of succession in which they entered it. My turn *in course* would be next. But all is in the hands of infinite wisdom and mercy.

I am, my dear friend, your's affectionately,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mr. Stephen to Mrs. H. More.

London, June 15, 1817.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I should have heard with more regret of the privation you have lately sustained, if I had not been previously prepared by painful accounts received from our common friends, to regard it as an event, the delay of which could only be a protraction of sufferings which admitted of no other termination.

I am one of the very many who sincerely sympathize with you and Mrs. Martha More on this melancholy occasion. Though I had not the pleasure of knowing personally the beloved sister you have lost, I have heard enough of her excellent and interesting character, to estimate your feelings, and to lament that so enlivening and pleasing a companion of your pilgrimage was not permitted to travel on with you to its close. That dear connections, however, should depart at the same moment, without the pain of separation, is too rare a felicity to be expected; and the next blessing to *that*, is the having been preserved to each other to so late a period of life, that the time of re-union cannot be far distant. I mean of course in cases like the present, where there are the best grounds of Christian hope and confidence that the re-union, come when it may, will be delightful.

For my own part, I am almost ashamed to say how completely this hope has consoled me under

Digitized by Google

my last and most severe privation, because I am conscious that to those who have made high advances in Christian faith and practice, and who know how wretchedly small my own attainments are, it must appear presumptuous. But though there are seasons when I feel no small anxiety lest I should want wings to reach those seats of bliss, to which, I doubt not, my dear Mrs. Stephen has ascended, my trust in the pardoning mercy and infinite goodness of God, in general, prevails, and fills me with a confident hope that I shall soon be re-united with her in heaven. Much, I feel, must be first done in my heart; but God has the power, and I trust also the gracious will to do it.

May Mrs. M. More, and you, who can so much more reasonably draw consolation from the same copious source, be enabled effectually to do so!

I rejoice, not without surprise, that you are so capable still of another resource, of which also I know the value; active public labours with your pen in the cause of God and man. I received some new and very well-timed fruits of them, for which I have delayed to return my thanks, because I have been weekly, and almost daily in expectation of being able to send you at the same time a new publication of my own, of which I now enclose a copy. It is not with me as with yourself: my pen grows old, so also do my spirits; not in the way of gloom indeed, but of heaviness, and sleepiness, and dulness. My engagements to the press, therefore, are very tardily, as well as inadequately performed. I am nevertheless likely to be always in

Digitized by Google

the hands of the printers while I can write at all; for slavery will find work enough for my pen, as sin and sedition do for your's, until we go where truth will want no press, and charity no advocate.

With kindest respects and cordial best wishes for Mrs. M. More and yourself,

I am, my dear Madam,
Very respectfully and
affectionately your's,
JAMES STEPHEN.

From the Rev. R. C. Whalley to Mrs. H. More.

Clifton, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have heard of the breach which it has pleased God to make in your little happy society at Barley Wood, and you will believe I feel for you most sincerely; indeed I myself have lost a very kind friend, whose uniform attentions to me I cannot but remember with gratitude. You have a principle of submission to the will of God, and so well know the whole extent of that duty, that I need not exhort you to it, nor present to you those topics of consolation under this affliction, or those uses and improvements of it, which are already so familiar to your mind. Indeed my strength would hardly permit it just now if it *were* necessary. I myself am issuing from a hot furnace of trial, but not more so than was necessary for me, or too grievous to be endured, since my God and Saviour was evidently with me to strengthen me, and to assure me that

Digitized by Google

not a hair of my head should perish. My confidence in the creed and principles I have professed and embraced are more than ever confirmed; and were an angel from heaven to produce any other gospel to me than that which I have received, I should reject it as spurious and unscriptural. May God give us all strength to abide by him, and *his plain word*, and we may be sure he will ever abide by us, and never fail us nor forsake us. May his power and grace support you, my dear friend, and your dear sister in this hour of need; and may you both believe me to be what I really am, your most affectionate and sympathizing

Friend and servant,

R. C. WHALLEY.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

September 19, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I sit down with the intention of repaying you in measure if not in weight. I should have been uneasy about you had I not heard from several quarters (the last from Mr. Roberts) that you were looking stout. I trust that God may intend you for one other great work, that of building up the new empire of Hayti on stable and Christian principles.

How can you be so barbarous as to talk of my writing for France, or for England, or for any thing. I have long since hung up my harp. I did to be sure take it down in the spring, but it was then a *Jew's-harp*. Dire necessity, and the impor-

Digitized by Google

tunity of some great people, drove me to scribble about thirteen pieces, such as they were, in about six weeks. Pretty well for a septuagenary, I think.

Did I ever tell you I am in trade, and capable of being made a bankrupt? The poor miners at Shipham, &c. have, I believe, experienced a distress no where else felt. Besides begging a considerable sum for them, I employed my own money in purchasing their ore. Seventy-five pounds were soon gone. I have now given security to government, jointly with six other persons, for £700. more. These poor people, who have often not tasted food more than once in two days, have never uttered a word against Providence or government. A friend of mine called on one poor woman, who was nearly famished, and asked her how she bore up. 'Madam,' said she, 'when I feel very faint, I go up and pray two or three times a day, and I come down so *refreshed*.' How many fare sumptuously *every* day, and never pray at all.

We are expecting Mr. and Mrs. Huber from Geneva; it is he who has so elegantly translated Cœlebs into French in Paris. I had a magnificent copy sent me, and a less splendid one of the German translation from Vienna. I have been much amused with the French reviews of Cœlebs, written with great gravity and friendliness. The one in the *Constitutionel* was by poor Madame de Stäel, and evinced more candour than I deserved at her hands.

Adieu, my dear friend. Pray for one who greatly needs your prayers.

H. More.

Digitized by Google

Extract of a letter from Mrs. H. More to Mr. Macauley.

Barley Wood, Nov. 21, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your kind letters were really a great solace in the hour of our first dismay and affliction. Never did any national visitation feel so like a domestic calamity. I used scarcely to think of kings and queens as of my fellow-creatures, but really these blooming and now blasted royalties had so entwined themselves about our hearts and affections, as to excite an interest altogether new to one's feelings. This calamity is as wide as it is deep. We mourn the individual loss, the extinction of so much happiness in a region in which we have not been used to look for happiness. The circumstance you mention of the Princess having had family prayer, was confirmed to me by the Bishop of Salisbury, when he was lately here. How one wishes that the desolate survivor had the comfort and the benefit of some genuine Christian friends about him.

I have lately been called upon for a corrected copy for a new edition of Cœlebs, (the fifteenth) and of Practical Piety, (the eleventh.) In spite of the dull task of reforming points and particles, I found the revisal, of the last especially, a salutary and mortifying employment. How easy it is to be good upon paper! I felt myself humbled even to a sense of hypocrisy, to observe (for I had forgotten the book) how very far short I had myself fallen

Digitized by Google

of the habits and principles, and interior sanctity, which I had found it so easy to recommend to others. I hardly read a page which did not carry some reproach to my own heart. I frequently think of a line which Prior puts into the mouth of Solomon.

'They brought my proverbs to confute my life.'

By the way, I wish that in the very pleasing paper in the last Christian Observer, on 'Sacred Poetry,' the writer had mentioned that almost forgotten, but in my opinion, beautiful poem.

H. More.

Extract of a letter from Mrs. H. More to a Friend.

November, 1817.

Time, though it has somewhat tranquillized our spirits, has not lightened the feeling of our irreparable loss. Whether we consider the bereaved Prince, or the country, the calamity is unspeakably great. A fond and happy as well as a virtuous and devout Prince and Princess, sounded like a romance, but the woeful catastrophe has brought us back to the sadness of real history. Notwithstanding the delightful and truly Christian letter with which Mr. Inglis favoured me, I cannot help considering the event as a frowning providence. Why do we slide so much from our daily and hourly dependence upon God? Why were no public prayers offered up for this sweet Princess? Why was the abundant harvest (a blessing as unexpected as undeserved) never acknowledged—at least in our churches? Why are

Digitized by Google

our rulers in the church so much less vigilant and active than those of the state? Why are our public recognitions of Divine mercy so much less frequent, as well as less fervent, than those of the northern states? I sometimes lay this flattering unction to my soul—that, perhaps, we feel more than we say, and they say more than they feel.

Dear Lady ——! I fear she will be a sacrifice to this hopeless case. I wish the doctors would let poor suffering creatures, when hope is extinguished, die in their own beds, and not embitter their pains by the addition of wearisome journeys, and inconvenient lodgings. How fortunate was your meeting!

Bristol quite rivals London, both in grief of heart and in outward expression. Scarcely a dry eye in all the crowded churches on Wednesday. We sent all our servants in and outside of the carriage, that some of the family at least, might be benefited by the sermon:—at our own church there was none!

H. More.

From Sir W. W. Pepys to Mrs. H. More.

Gloucester Place, Feb. 17, 1818.

My dear Friend,

Your very kind and interesting letter came just at the time when I was going to send you my anniversary inquiry after your health and proceedings; it contains exactly what I like to have in a letter from a friend; and so far from requiring any apology for egotism, it would have been much less satisfac-

Digitized by Google

tory, if it had been more about any one else. My regard for you enables me to partake of your distress from the sickness and loss of your sister, and of your comfort in finding that your efforts to do good have not been confined to one country or people, but are already in operation through the frozen regions of the north. How glad I am to find that the tremendous power of the press, whose terrible effects have in our time been felt so as to shake the nations, may, in your hands, be employed to smooth the rugged inhabitants of Iceland and Russia, and to diffuse the mild spirit of Christianity through the Polar circle. Though the good which your writings in general, and particularly the 'Hints to a Young Princess,' had wrought upon the mind of her to whom we, short-sighted mortals, looked as our future Queen, has been cut short by her lamented death; yet it must be a great source of comfortable reflection for you, that they were probably the means of preparing her spirit for the society to which we trust she is now united; and her reading them so near the great change she was to undergo, seemed to assure us that they were instrumental in fortifying her mind against the delusions of earthly pomp and grandeur. Who knows but that she may be the first to meet you in another world, and ascribe to you, under providence, the reception she, as we hope, has met with there!

As I have now accomplished my seventy-eighth year, you will not be surprised when I tell you that my thoughts are daily employed upon the great change which must inevitably soon take place; nor

Digitized by Google

do I find that the contemplation of it has had any bad effects on my spirits: not from any confidence arising from a retrospect of my past life, but from the hope that the same gracious Being who has bestowed so many great blessings upon me in this life, will not withdraw his support and protection when I am entering upon another, but will comfort me while I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, not for any merits of mine, but for those of Him, who is held out to us as a propitiation for our sins.

You found, I perceive, 'the Sexagenarian' as dull as I did; but as one of our friends used to tell us, that there was no book which did not contain something to remember, so was I perfectly rewarded for reading through *that*, by Parsons' incomparable dialogue between Miss Seward and Hagley; you recollect Lord Orford's similar instance of a dull book, in which a lover told his mistress that if he had as many lives as Plutarch, he would risk them all for her.

Upon receiving back your 'Bas Bleu,' which I had lent to Lady ——, she sent me a note, which I will transmit to you, as it bestows such an appropriate title upon you as that of a '*virtuous wit*.'— Adieu my dear friend,

Your's affectionately,

W. W. PEPYS.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Miss M. Roberts.

MY DEAR MARGARET,

The monopolizing Martha allows me a scrap of paper so small, as to be better suited to my lack of time, than the abundance of my affection. It will, however, be sufficiently large to say, I shall not be able to do what you request, and your friend wishes. I can only return you the answer which I lately made to a similar application, viz. that there are ten thousand *parsons* in the land, not only whose duty, but whose *trade* it is, to watch over and repel such delinquences. Why don't you and dear Mary undertake it yourselves? I should be glad to see *that parson*, for which you two, if you club your wits, would not be a good match. Do you see 'the Sequel of Cœlebs, or the Letters of the Stanley family,' advertised in the Christian Observer? It is very odd that people can't be contented to take their own ground, without invading mine. If the writer had put his name I should not mind it, but no doubt it will be taken for mine. This is evidently *not* Miss B——'s, that treat is still to come. Do take every opportunity to name it, as I fear my friends will send for it under the idea that it is mine. It is very provoking that G—— has not yet sent my British Review. I hope it will come to-night. Mr. M—— who is here, speaks in very high terms of the Review of 'Childe Harold.' For my own part, when I read the Poem,

Digitized by Google

it is hard to say whether I felt more admiration for the poet, or distaste of the man.

I miss you both—as copiers, and critics, and companions—I would say as friends, but that it would spoil the alliteration. Love to your dear sister.

Yours, very affectionately,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Tryphena Bathurst.

Barley Wood, April 7, 1818.

My dear lady Tryphena,

Since I had the gratification of writing to you last, it has pleased God to remove to, I trust, a happier world, a third sister; I have now but one remaining, who is a great invalid. These trials are sent in mercy to detach us from a world, to which, with all its sufferings, we are apt to cling. As to myself, I have had a long space allowed me for preparation. God has dealt very mercifully with me, for I have, on the whole, better health than in the meridian of life. I am surrounded with comforts; and though I have lost so many who were very dear to me, I have the happiness of still possessing a great number of valuable friends. They are almost too good to me; for we see a great deal more company than you would think could find out this retired spot. Among other gratifying visitors, in the winter, were the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Miss Vansittart. The Bishop of Salisbury came to see us not long before the death of his lamented pupil. We little thought then what a

Digitized by Google

calamity was hanging over our heads! It was an overwhelming event.

I had the favour lately to receive a letter written in very good English, from the Russian Princess Metschersky. She has translated into Russ, and published, many of my Cheap Repository Tracts, which, she says, are widely circulated, and much read. She seems to be a woman of very deep piety, and full of zeal for the moral and religious improvement of her benighted countrymen. I have been pleased to learn from a gentleman who has made the tour of Northern Europe, that he found 'Cœlebs' and 'Practical Piety' much read in Sweden, and the latter in Iceland. They had American editions. I was surprised to find that the English language is so popular among these Northern people. You will forgive the egotism of my mentioning these circumstances. I shall rejoice to be favoured with a good report of the health of your ladyship and the other ladies; to whom I desire to present my affectionate respects. I shall never forget the kindness with which I was honoured by your noble family for a long series of years. If we do not meet again in this tumultuous world, may we meet in that of eternal rest and peace.

Adieu, my dear Lady Tryphena, believe me, with the sincerest regard, your Ladyship's obliged and faithful,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG the numerous interesting characters who visited Barley Wood during the year 1817, we have to mention Dr. Chalmers, whose name is associated with whatever belongs to the advancement of truth, and the practical good of his country; Dr. Paterson, the Northern Bible Missionary, who had just returned from Russia, and Dr. Henderson, who had very recently accomplished a tour through the North of Europe in the same character. To learn from these last-mentioned gentlemen that the religion of the gospel of Christ was making, throughout the countries they had visited, a decided progress, was to Mrs. More a subject of great rejoicing; nor could it fail to awaken her gratitude to be told that her pen had been an instrument of good in those distant quarters. Dr. Henderson informed her, that in travelling through Sweden he had found an American edition of 'Practical Piety' in many hands; and that in Iceland both that work and 'Cœlebs' were likewise read with great apparent profit, and general estimation. By Dr. Pat-

Digitized by Google

erson she was informed that a Russian princess (the Princess Metschersky) had actually accomplished the task of translating several of her tracts into her native language, which she was circulating, with a great number of others, with exemplary zeal. The account given by Dr. Paterson of this interesting lady deserves to be recorded. She was an edifying instance of the power of religion. The truth had found its way to her breast, by the operation of the great transforming Agent, (Mr. Pinkerton being the ostensible instrument), and had wrought its specific work by softening and reducing a character, said to have been naturally haughty, to the low level to which high imaginations are cast down, when the thoughts are brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Dr. Paterson requested Mrs. More to present the princess, through his hands, with the three volumes of the 'Repository Tracts,' which was done; and in return Mrs. More received the following letter, which it would be an injustice to withhold from the readers of this work.

St. Petersburgh, Oct. 22, old style,

MADAM,

Though I am really unable to express my sentiments in English, and though having often tried in vain to do it, I have always been obliged to lay my pen aside, yet I cannot help, *I must write*, my heart desiring to show you my gratitude. My sincere

Digitized by Google

admiration overcomes the shame I feel to address you, madam, in such an incorrect language, and forces me to tell you, how much I was delighted at receiving the books you were so kind as to send me. I receive them, dear madam, as a new encouragement to translate part of them, as I have already done your 'Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,' the 'Wealthy Farmers,' and 'Charles the Footman,' which are already read with great pleasure in my country. I am sorry indeed not to be capable of translating some of your other works, as the 'Practical Piety,' the 'Christian Morals,' &c. &c. But alas, madam! I am a very poor and weak translator; the little I do, is all that I am able to do, and I thank daily our merciful heavenly Master, for having permitted me to have even this little share in his service, and in the important work in which you, madam, have such a distinguished part. Yet let the strong and the experienced be the helper and the guide of those who, though willing to do good, are, however, weak and ignorant. I love my Lord and my Saviour Jesus Christ, in him alone do I trust, therefore I eagerly lay hold of the hand you stretched out to me, in his name, and for his sake; and laying aside every ceremony and worldly politeness, I declare to you plainly that I love you in our Lord, and that you have made me quite happy with a few lines of your own hand-writing in the book you sent me. I dare not ask, neither hope for something more, but I entreat you, madam, to accept with indulgence these my broken, and I suppose, half unintelligible sentences; they were written, I assure

Digitized by Google

you, in the only intent of expressing the sincere love, and the high regard with which I am, madam,

Your most obedient servant,

P. SOPHIA METSCHERSKY.

P. S. Could I write but a little better, I would with such a pleasure tell you how graciously and mercifully the Lord deals with my dear country; what rapid and wonderful progress his divine word is making here, and how his divine love has prepared the hearts of our emperor, our princes, and our chiefs, to be the nurses, and at the same time the humble disciples of the saving word of life.

But I cannot, I fear. I must adore his bounty in silence. Dear and most honoured Madam, join your prayers to our's, that the great work may prosper here, as it does in your country, and that at the end we may meet you in joyful songs there, where we will all be one, united in our Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Among the variety of testimonies to the success which has attended the labours of Hannah More in distant parts of the world, there could have happened none more agreeable to her feelings than that which was conveyed to her in the summer of 1818, in a letter from the late Chief Justice of Ceylon, Sir Alexander Johnstone, a name enrolled among those happy victors, whose laurels have been watered by no widow's tears, but are fresh with the dew of the blessing which humanity invokes upon those, who bring it to the

Digitized by Google

'knowledge of its hope and its inheritance, from the depths of ignorance and superstition. Those who are interested in the conversion of the heathen, must remember with gratitude the support which this Christian judge afforded to the missionary cause during his residence in the island. Sir A. Johnstone's letter informed her that he had caused many of her tracts and other parts of her works to be translated into the Cingalese and Tamul languages, and that they were read with pleasure and avidity by the natives; confirming the account by a beautiful specimen of a Cingalese translation of the drama of 'Moses in the Bulrushes,' written on a Palmyra leaf, and inclosed in a case of the wood of the country, richly painted.

She was afterwards informed by the Chief Justice that a translation of several parts of her 'Essay on St. Paul,' was in progress, towards which the attention of the natives would, he doubted not, be much excited, as the New Testament in their own language had now been for some time in their hands. The share which Sir A. Johnstone had in effecting the gradual abolition of slavery in this island, is a circumstance with which the reader is probably acquainted. As a step towards the consummation of this most desirable object, it was enacted that every child which should be born after the 12th of August, 1816, should be free; and it was at the same time resolved, that the anniversary of this triumph of benevolence and justice shall be celebrated among the natives by a grateful commemoration.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. H. More was requested to furnish an appropriate ballad for the occasion. She complied, and produced a little poetical dialogue, which she called the 'Feast of Freedom,' and which, by its dramatic form, was well suited to the habits and tastes of the people of the island. It will be found in the second volume of the last edition of Mrs. More's works, published by Mr. Cadell. A few stanzas of the poem will serve as a specimen of its spirit and purpose.

SABAT—holding out the Bible.

This is the boon which England sends,
It breaks the chains of sin,
Oh blest exchange for fragrant groves!
Oh barter most divine!

It yields a trade of noblest gain,
Which other trades may miss;
A few short years of care and pain,
For endless, perfect bliss.

This shews us freedom how to use,
To love our daily labour;
Forbids our time in sloth to lose,
Or riot with our neighbour.

Then let our masters gladly find,
A free man works the faster;
Who serves his God with heart and mind,
Will better serve his master.

Two priests of the country had worked their passage to England in the same ship with Sir Alex-

Digitized by Google

ander, and to them he committed Mrs. More's lines for translation into the Cingalese.

We shall here introduce the letters relating to the transactions in the island of Ceylon, which were so successfully carried on under the auspices of Sir Alexander Johnstone, in a consecutive series, notwithstanding the distance between their dates, in order that the subject may not be broken.

Part of a letter from Sir Alexander Johnstone to Mrs. H. More.

29, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, Aug. 19, 1819.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Mr. Butterworth having been strongly impressed with the idea of the essential benefit, which the cause of religion and humanity would derive throughout Asia, from the circulation amongst the natives of Ceylon of your very beautiful little poem on the Abolition of Domestic Slavery in that island, has had several copies of it printed, for the purpose of distribution. May I take the liberty of requesting your acceptance of some of them, and of a translation into the Eloo (the Sanscrit of Ceylon) which the Budhoo priests who came to England with me have made of that poem. Lithographic copies of the latter will be received by the natives with delight. I know from experience how much they will be flattered by this proof that you have thought their situation worthy of your notice. I

Digitized by Google

have the honour to be, with the most sincere respect and esteem,

My dear Madam,
Your most obliged and faithful servant,
ALEXANDER JOHNSTONE.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir Alexander Johnstone.

Barley Wood, Aug. 24, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR,

I always feel myself particularly honoured by every attention of your's, and you must allow me to return you my best thanks for your very obliging letter, and the little printed inclosures with the pretty and apt embellishments. I shall keep the Cingalese transcript as an interesting addition to your former favours of that kind. Had I suspected that these slovenly verses would ever have been printed in English, I would have endeavoured to have made them less unworthy of the honour you have done them.

I cordially hope that Lady Johnstone's health will receive all the improvement you can desire from change of climate. I beg leave to present my best respects to her Ladyship. Though you remain in England, I am persuaded you will never neglect any occasion which may offer, of increasing the obligations your poor Asiatic islanders already owe you. I trust they will teach their children never to forget to whose zeal and abilities they are indebted for their being born free. I have only to wish that

Digitized by Google

your successor may inherit your desire of making them *Christians.*

My American correspondents give me frequent reports of the growth of religion, and the increase of religious institutions throughout that vast continent; and I have recent accounts of provinces which have been hitherto very backward in all their improvements, from the bishop of Maryland, who sends me a most favourable detail of the general progress throughout his diocese. He speaks of the prosperity of the episcopal church in the United States, where they have now nine bishops.

I know not whether I ever took the liberty to present to your elder children my 'Hints for the Education of a Young Princess;' if I have not, will you have the goodness to desire Mr. Hatchard to send you a copy from the author, which I shall beg them to accept. Please to mention the third edition, as I had just added at the beginning a sketch of the character of the Princess Charlotte of Wales: which not being advertized, is not yet known.

You give us much pleasure in the hope you hold out, that your stay in England may at some time procure us the honour of a visit.

With my sister's best respects, I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir,
Your very faithful and obliged,
H. More.

Digitized by Google

The Editor has been favoured with the following pleasing account of this happy event for the Island of Ceylon:—

Dramatic representations have been in use from time immemorial amongst the Hindoos in India, as the medium of communicating all moral, religious, and political ideas to the people of the country. The Jesuits being aware of the circumstance, made use, while their order existed in India, of dramatic representations for the purpose of making known to the natives of the country, the historical parts of the Old and New Testament, and the principal characters mentioned in the Bible. To avail himself of this plan for circulating Christian morals amongst the natives of Ceylon, Sir A. Johnstone caused a translation to be made of the Sacred Dramas of Mrs. Hannah More, for the purpose of being represented amongst the different classes of natives in the Island, and on his return to England in 1819, having communicated what he had done to Mrs. H. More, induced her, upon his suggestion, to sketch out a plan of various dramas, which she intended, had her health and leisure permitted, to write, with a view to their being translated into the languages of Ceylon, and represented there, for the purpose of making the natives familiar with such religious, moral, and political opinions, as were suited to their understandings, and to the circumstances of the country.

It was conceived that the writings of Mrs. H. More were the more likely to have a powerful effect among the natives of India, as the author

Digitized by Google

of the most popular moral work in circulation amongst them, was a female philosopher, called Aoyar, who lived in the southern peninsula of India, about the eighth or ninth century.

The Dutch settlements in Ceylon having capitulated to the British arms in 1796, the right of every description of private property was guaranteed to all the inhabitants; and according to this guarantee, the inhabitants of all descriptions conceived that their right to their domestic slaves was fully acknowledged, and that the British government was not authorized to make any law for liberating them or their descendants; and when Sir Alexander Johnstone adopted measures for gradually putting an end to slavery in Ceylon, he found it impossible to get the Dutch and other slave-holders to acquiesce in any proceedings which modified the right so guaranteed to them.

But Sir Alexander having, while he was in England, obtained for all the inhabitants of Ceylon, natives as well as Europeans, the right of sitting upon juries, and being tried by juries of their own countrymen in all criminal cases, and various other valuable privileges, they, out of gratitude to him for the benefits which he had conferred upon them, came to a resolution in 1816, that all children born of their slaves after the 12th of August in that year, should be considered as born free, and should be maintained and educated by the proprietors of their parents, until they had attained the age of fourteen.

By way of publicly commemorating this event

Digitized by Google

every year, and in order that the government might be certain that all those children who were born free under this resolution, enjoyed their freedom, and that the spirit which originally led to the resolution of 1816, might be cherished and kept up among the inhabitants, Sir Alexander fixed upon the 12th of August every year, as the day upon which the supreme court of judicature in Ceylon should inquire into the subject, and the slaves themselves through out the island should have a holiday. Having mentioned the subject to Mrs. More, she wrote a copy of verses, to be sung upon the occasion by all the slaves who were present, which was translated into Cingalese by two Budhoo Priests, who had been brought to England by Sir Alexander for the purpose of being educated, and were then residing near Liverpool, with the late Dr. Adam Clarke, who had undertaken their instruction. The verses were set to music by Charles Wesley, the celebrated composer.

From Sir Alexander Johnstone to Mrs. H. More.

Great Cumberland Street, Oct. 5, 1827.

MY DEAR MADAM,

As your most popular and delightful little poem, 'The Feast of Freedom,' is so intimately connected in the hearts and minds of the natives of the island of Ceylon, with the introduction of the trial by jury amongst them, and the complete abolition of slavery of every description in that island, it occurs to me that you may wish to be in possession of an authen-

Digitized by Google

tic account of these two measures, the influence of which, from circumstances which I shall afterwards mention to you, is not likely to be confined to the Island of Ceylon, but must be extended to every part of India.

I have therefore the pleasure to send you, and beg your acceptance of a copy of the Asiatic Journal for last June, and a copy of the eleventh report of the proceedings of the African Institution. The first contains a very detailed account of the objects I had in view, in extending and securing under the great seal of England, all the rights of Englishmen in Europe, to the native inhabitants of the British possessions in India, and of the effects which the enjoyment, and the free exercise of those rights for the last fifteen or sixteen years have had upon the moral and political character of the natives of Ceylon. The second contains an equally detailed account of the different measures by which I gradually led the slave proprietors on the island of Ceylon, to come to an unanimous declaration in the supreme court of that island, that all children whatever born of their slaves after the 12th of August 1816, should be free; and thereby put an end altogether to the state of slavery which had prevailed in that island for three centuries.

In consequence of a letter which at his request I wrote in May 1825, to the President of the Board of Control, a copy of which letter is given in the Asiatic Journal of June last, steps are about to be adopted in every part of the East India Company's possessions in India, for extending to all the native

Digitized by Google

inhabitants in those possessions, the same rights and the same privilege of sitting upon juries, which were extended by me to the native inhabitants of the island of Ceylon; which measures must eventually lead in India, as they have already led in Ceylon, to the complete abolition of slavery throughout that immense empire. Under these circumstances it is my intention to have translations of your poem made into the different languages which are the most prevalent in Asia, in order that the ideas of religion, and those of freedom, may be inseparably associated in the minds and hearts of all those natives of India who may now or hereafter participate in the benefits to which I have alluded.

I hope when I have the good fortune to see you, to have the pleasure of showing and explaining to you a very interesting engraving which was published some years ago by W. Bennet, an artist who is now, I believe, in America. It was made from a very fine picture of Mr. Stephanoff's, which was taken from a very clever and curious drawing, executed by a young half-cast man at Colombo, of the Supreme Court in that island, at the time of a very celebrated trial which took place soon after the introduction of trial by jury amongst the natives of Ceylon. It is peculiarly interesting, from its affording not only a correct idea of the Cingalese prisoners who were tried, and of the chiefs who happened to sit upon the jury during that time, but also very exact portraits of all the natives, both male and female, who were distin-

Digitized by Google

guished for their zeal in carrying into effect the measures relative to the introduction of jury trial, and the emancipation of slave children among their countrymen.

The affecting circumstance of the slave children and their mothers, attending in the supreme court, to hear their proprietors record, in public court, their resolution to liberate the children of their slaves, is remarkably well described, and the whole costume of the people of all the different sorts of religions in Ceylon, is extremely correct. I am told that the engraving, in consequence of the demand for it, is at present become scarce.

Believe me, with a thousand apologies for overwhelming you with so long a letter.

My dear Madam,

Your very sincere and

obliged servant,

ALEX. JOHNSTONE.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Charles Wesley.

Barley Wood, Nov. 20, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of returning you many thanks for your very skilful and kind contribution of music to the 'Feast of Freedom.' All the connoisseurs agree in saying it is excellent. This evening we have a little concert of your providing in my room. Some friends who have fine voices and good taste, are staying with me, and the piano-forte is to be brought up stairs, that I may

Digitized by Google

enjoy the treat. I only wish the poetry was as good as the music. Pray present my most respectful regards to Sir A. Johnstone; I should have written to thank him for his kindness, but have a complaint in my eyes which has prevented me.

Remember me kindly to your good sister, and believe me,

Your very grateful and obliged,

H. More.

We now return to the year 1818, which was as prolific as any of the former years, in interesting introductions to Hannah More. Soon after Sir A. Johnstone, with his Cingalese credentials, had finished his diplomacy at Barley Wood, it was the turn of Persia to be represented at that court, in the persons of two noblemen, who having come to this country with a view to the acquisition of the English language, and an acquaintance with the arts and sciences in which Britain had the fame of superiority, presented themselves at her residence, and were admitted with the respect due to the dignity of their rank and commission. We would not speak with hyperbole of these distinguished individuals, or of the circumstances surrounding them, but it surely was no common case, that in the same year, the priests of Budhoo were occupied in giving a Cingalese dress to some of the productions of that pen, which by its powerful attraction, had drawn to her residence two noble travellers from Persia, and brought a letter of affectionate homage from a Muscovite Princess. Mrs. More presented her new

Digitized by Google

Persian friends with her work on *Practical Piety*, which they declared they would translate into their language immediately on their return home, and that it should be the first work which should bring into exercise the knowledge they had acquired of the art of printing, and employ the printing press which they were carrying back into their own country. They replied to an interrogatory of Mrs. H. More's, respecting their acquaintance with the sacred volume, that they had read both the Old and New Testament, and that they preferred the books of Isaiah and Job, to any other part. 'Then, (replied she,) I presume you feel a reverence for that person, whose coming is especially predicted in both of these books,' to which they gave a decided assent.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Knox.

September 26, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,

My friendship for Mrs. La Touche and yourself is, by the length of time, the convictions of my understanding, and the affections of my heart, become so established, so much a part of myself, that it would be incapable of declension even without any overt act on the part of either of you. So agreeable a *flapper* as your kind letter, was, however, such a quickener of my feelings, that it was matter of no small regret that I have been till now physically incapable of answering it. About three weeks ago my sister and myself were each suddenly seized with a violent attack of fever, from which we

Digitized by Google

are, through the mercy of God, recovering, though very gradually. We are still confined to our chambers, and are not allowed to see any one. I believe my own illness was partly caused by too great excitement, from an influx of company, chiefly strangers, but who were recommended by friends.

You will not be sorry to hear that the last work our lamented princess read during her pupilage, (as her preceptor the bishop himself told me,) and the last she read before her death, was the one written expressly for her, in which you took so kind an interest. It was very kind and condescending in the bishop to say that he considered 'The Hints' as rather intended for the teacher than the pupil, and had availed himself of them accordingly. I should not mention this but to you, who will be pleased to hear that the book, as to her, was not written altogether in vain.

I remember that my dear old friend, Dr. Johnson, once asked me, 'What was the greatest compliment you could pay to an author?' I replied, 'To quote him.' 'Thou art right, my child,' said he. Now your remembering and citing two passages from poor unworthy me, at the distance of twenty years, did really gratify me.

I wish I could shew Mrs. L—— a very curious present I have just received from Sir Alexander Johnstone, the Chief Justice of Ceylon; it is one of my 'Sacred Dramas' written upon palm leaves, in the Cingalese language, the cover most beautifully painted and enriched. He writes me that the 'Essay on St. Paul,' &c. is translated, and

Digitized by Google

about to be published in the Tamul and Cingalese, partly on paper, partly on palm leaves, and that he proposes to publish most of my writings in all such of the country languages as are generally understood throughout India. Forgive this egotism.

I agree with you, my dear sir, that the Epistle of St. James has left a subject for a fine practical commentary. Why don't you take it up yourself? it is worthy of you, and would be peculiarly in your own way. You would not only treat it morally, but holily. I want to see St. Peter also taken up in a new way. It may sound odd to use that term, but I cannot help calling his a character almost dramatic; his warm affections, his undoubting confidence, his repeated falls, his fervid repentance, the forwardness of his feelings, the failure of his resolutions, the inconceivably piercing look cast upon him by his divine Master, the consolatory message, not sent to the beloved John, but to the swearing, protesting *denier*, the "Go, tell Peter!" How touching are all these particulars! When I was very young, and learning Spanish, I translated a little poem, called 'Las Lagrimas de San Pedro.' I have lost the translation, and know not where I found the original.

Dear Mr. Jebb kindly sent me his valuable Dublin Sermon; but continual interruptions, and the dry and insipid task of converting commas into colons, and turning topsy-turvy-letters upright, through (I blush to say it) eighteen volumes, for a new general edition, has made me very deficient in the pleasant duties of friendship. We were de-

Digitized by Google

lighted with a short visit from him and his very interesting friend Foster, who revived a little my long-forgotten delight in the Tuscan muse.

When you see my favourite, Robert Daly, assure him of my kind remembrance. I had a message from Judge Daly and his nieces, declaring an intention to visit us before my illness, but I have not yet seen them.

I say the less about —— because I trust she will go halves in this ill-written scrawl. As long as I shall remember any thing I shall remember her virtues and her kindness; I shall love both her general goodness, and her particular goodness to me. I cannot say all I think *of*, and feel *for* her.

Adieu, my dear Sir, with my sister's best regards, believe me ever,

Your faithful and obliged,

H. More.

P. S. I venture to send you an epitaph, written for the daughter of a dear friend. It is not worth your reading, but Mrs. L—— will tolerate it; it is meant for her.

EPITAPH ON MISS G——, (AGED EIGHTEEN,)

So fair, so young, so gentle, so sincere,
So loved, so early lost, may claim a tear:
Yet mourn not if the life resumed by heaven
Was spent to every end for which 'twas given.
The part assign'd, if she essay'd to fill;
If she obey'd her heavenly Father's will;
If humble trust in her Redeemer's love
Matured her early for the courts above,
Could she too soon escape a world of sin;
Or could eternal bliss too soon begin?
Then cease her death too fondly to deplore;
What could the longest life have added more?

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

Barley Wood, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your very kind, *too* kind letter, was brought me while at dinner with Mr. Inglis and his family: with whom I had the satisfaction to converse on your subject.

And now what shall I say to *you* for the instance you are giving of your Christian philanthropy? I cheerfully and thankfully accept the offer of your munificent bounty, which will very greatly enlarge my sphere of usefulness in the approaching dreary, but joyful season, when He "who for our sakes became poor, that we through him might become rich," visited this our world, and left us his divine example, that we should in our low measure and degree (as occasions are put into our power) administer to the bodily and spiritual wants of our fellow-creatures.

I have been in the habit of giving a small assistance to the orphan sons of two deceased friends, youths of great merit, but slender means, who are just now (with a little help from friends,) gone to College, and are in want of books. I hope you will not think it a departure from your benevolent intentions, if I expend a very few pounds in proper books for them; I have done it for several years, and can now through your bounty, make a small addition to this year's gift. One of them was son of an officer, the other of a clergyman, whose

Digitized by Google

library was sold; both of distinguished worth. I only give about five pounds worth.

You will have the goodness to order your generous benefaction to be paid to Messrs. Pole, Thornton and Co.'s Bank, with directions to send it to Messrs. Wright and Co. Bankers, in Bristol, for me. You will cause many a widow's heart to sing for joy; melody which will reach higher than that of Catalani or Miss Stephens.

I thank God, that through his mercy I am nearly restored to my usual moderate state of health, and should be much better if I could contrive to see less company. Since my recovery, however, I have seen several interesting strangers, from whom one gets surer information than from books. Yesterday Sir Nicholas Trant and his daughter, the former just returned from the Brazils, and from much conference with the king, of whose natural understanding he speaks well, but he says that his majesty is very ignorant. I have had more intercourse with Sir A. Johnstone, Chief Justice at Ceylon, and have been writing some verses, (which are worthy of the bellman,) and which are being translated by two Priests he brought over here, into the Cingalese, to celebrate an annual festival in Ceylon, on the Abolition of Slavery for all who are born since the year 1816.

We had a few days ago a visit from two interesting and very sensible Persians, who have been studying the literature, arts, and sciences of this country, and are returning home with great acquisitions of knowledge. I never saw any Asiatics before who had energy, spirit, or curiosity;

Digitized by Google

these are all alive. In my garden is an urn to the memory of Locke, who was born in our village; when they saw it, they exclaimed in rapture, 'What! Locke, the metaphysician.' They go to our different places of worship, attend Bible and other public meetings, and seem to have fewer prejudices against Christianity than you would suppose. They particularly admire Job and Isaiah, and those parts of the Old Testament which have most Orientalism. Their figures and costumes are striking, their manners very genteel. I was amused to see the Mahometans drink a little wine. The most literary of the two wished to have something of mine as a memento. I gave him 'Practical Piety,' which he said he would translate when he got home. Here you will say is sufficient egotism.

This has been written some days, but the illness of my sister has hindered my finishing it.

Accept my most cordial wishes, that you and your beloved family may enjoy all the benefits and consolations of the gracious and hallowed season we are about to commemorate.

With my best regards to Lady Pepys,

I remain, my dear Sir William,

Your ever faithful and obliged friend,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

Barley Wood, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

This suspension of franks makes me watch for the chance of a conveyance by a private hand, though I fear I shall not have time to be as *tedious* as I could wish. Many thanks for your *joint*, long, interesting letter; it was just the sort I like, full of pleasant details about the things and persons I care for.—Mr. H.'s report of petrified episcopacy was quite graphical, so that methinks I see them. I send a slip of paper to be pasted in the tracts for Mrs. Fry, if you approve it. That wise and active disciple of her great master always puts me in mind of Deborah judging Israel under the palm-tree, and if I were a painter, I would desire her to sit for that portrait. Thanks for my work-bag, which is really pretty enough to be produced in its proper office in company. We are at present in the luxury of making hay, and in the terror of having it spoilt by the rain for which all the rest of the world is crying out. I do wish you could see our roses, they are so profuse that the whole interior of the treillage looks in a state of inflammation—quite a scarlet fever!

Mr. Huber's critique on Madame de Stäel will be a good preliminary discourse for me before my perusing the work: which I hope to do at some time more leisurely than the present. Our house has been a scene of perpetual interruptions by visits from stran-

Digitized by Google

gers, who, by bringing letters from friends, we cannot well refuse; but it encroaches sadly on my short remnant of time. We give no invitations, and return no visits, so that we cannot well be more royal; unless, indeed, I could escape answering letters, I mean those of unknown correspondents: those of friends are really refreshing. When I said I make no visits, I must except last Wednesday, when we attended the wedding of Miss J——, at that pretty place where I took you one morning. The bridegroom, an old friend also, a clergyman of talents, piety, and fortune—but, alas! like all the rest of the world, they sat out immediately for the continent!

I have just received a pamphlet sent me from Sir John Sinclair, with an earnest wish to have my opinion upon it. It was written by a daughter of his, and printed within a fortnight of her death. It is deeply serious, well-written; with elevated views of Christian doctrine; the whole highly practical. It will cost you but about a shilling, and may be read in less than an hour. I would have you get it. It is a letter to her younger sisters, and I hope may be useful beyond the limits of her own family. One or two phrases only some may think too Calvinistic, but you must excuse this in a Scotch education.

We are under deep concern at the death of our valuable neighbour, Mr. H. Addington. His long and severe illness I earnestly hope may have been sanctified to him. As a man of taste and literature; as a kind friend and agreeable neighbour,

Digitized by Google

he was most pleasant—as my coadjutor in some late trying circumstances among the distressed miners of our villages, most useful. His afflicted brother, who appears to have been most tenderly attached to him, has almost lived on the road, not daring to remain with him, I suppose on account of the dreadful turbulence of the Westminster election. Poor Mr. Addington has been much upon my mind for the last few weeks. He received the information of his approaching death with great resignation. and said it was no news to him. May we all be prepared to meet our God! He was many years younger than I, with better health; yet he is taken and I spared!

Mr. Huber will congratulate us that the Bristol election is likely to close to-morrow; both our old friends returned. What perjury, drunkenness, and vice are thus prevented!

I would recommend to you two *little* books, 'Bishop Duppa's Helps to Devotion,' and 'Baxteriana,' abridged from the invaluable works of Baxter, by Arthur Young. It is pleasant to see these two fathers of British agriculture, Young and Sinclair, now as zealous for the improvement of *souls* as they formerly were for that of *land*.

I wish Lady Lucy B——'s parties may do all the good I am sure she intends. She is a charming woman in person and mind. But I doubt whether such large assemblies for the professed purpose of religious conversation may not be liable to more objections than will be counterbalanced by the actual good received from the

Digitized by Google

interlocutors. I am not, however, sure of this, and should be cautious of giving an opinion on a plan so evidently intended for the promotion of piety.

My kindest regards to Mr. Huber. His narrative has brought me intimately acquainted with Mons. Pictet. With all his talents, I hope the young man he has brought over, will turn out to be the son of his mother, rather than the grandson of his grandfather. Talents are a fine thing when they are not the best thing a man has, but when put in the balance with Christian principles, they kick the beam. This truth perhaps will not be generally felt or acknowledged in this world, but if not confessed on the dying bed, it will be loudly proclaimed at the day of judgment; to many, the 'great day of dread, decision, and despair.'

I fear that the general distraction of the approaching septennial bustle is not the most favourable time for advertising 'Cœlebs.' Few advertisements I suspect, will be much attended to, but those, 'To the Worthy and Independent Electors,' &c. &c.

I am liberal enough to be glad you have seen so much of dear Mr. Wilberforce, though it is a privilege which I have put out of my own power to enjoy. My long voluntary sequestration has robbed me of much of that is great and good in society; but I thought it right that there should be an interval (mine has happily been a long one) between the world and the grave. Mr. —— is a blessing to the age by his independent, impartial, and sober conduct in the promotion of genuine religion in his valuable periodical publication.

Digitized by Google

Are you thinking of Geneva? Not, I hope, for your ultimate home.

Present my kindest respects to Miss Vansittart.

My health is just now pretty good, better than I have a right to expect, and much better than I deserve. My sister's is moderate, but not worse.

With our joint regards to Mr. H. I am ever,

My dear friend,

Your's sincerely,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

Barley Wood, July 16, 1818.

And so, my dear friends, you are actually about to quit old England. I am glad, however, you have not lost your affection for it, but propose to return. I think it a wise determination; for I am somewhat of the opinion of old John Wesley, who in a sermon, not long before he died, after saying what great sinners we were, and how we abused our mercies, and what punishments England deserved for her sins, cried out in a familiar tone, 'But we are the best people in the world for all that!' It appears to me that the two classes of characters are more decided than they were; the wicked seem more wicked, and the good better. The best, however, have need enough for watchfulness and humility. These appear to me to be the two characteristics of the decided Christian. *Watch and pray* are two monosyllables which easily slip off the tongue, and yet they contain the

Digitized by Google

great rule of Christianity as given by its great Author, I am glad Mrs. F—— liked her present. Her exertions have struck me forcibly as a proof how the Almighty chooses his instruments,—such, perhaps as our short-sighted wisdom would not have selected. None but a woman, and none but a quaker woman, *could* have ventured, or if venturing, could have succeeded. Their habits of public speaking have taken away that fear of men which would have intimidated one of *us*, even if we had more zeal and piety than are commonly found amongst us: besides which, they are aided by their practical conviction that the Spirit instantaneously suggests what they shall say. Again, had you or I, or any churchwoman, possessed the heroic piety of Mrs. ——, what a cry would have been raised against us. 'Enthusiast and fanatic' would have been the human reward of our endeavours. Not all the sobriety of mind and soundness of judgment which this good lady has shewn, would have been of any avail in *our* case. So you see how God fits the instrument to the work!

Our afflicted friends Sir Edward and Lady Hartopp weep again for another family loss. Mr. Adderley, the valuable husband of one of their surviving daughters, is dead of a ruptured blood vessel. They were to have been with us at a grand rustic fête we gave a few days ago, after the Wrington Bible Meeting. Their absence was kindly though very inadequately supplied by a most sumptuous dessert from Leicestershire.

My sister has been much better, but we ventured

Digitized by Google

to undertake another fatiguing operation too soon after the former: we visited two of our schools, (twenty miles out and home) on Sunday, and taught near four hundred children. She has been quite laid up since, and I suffer from the excessive heat.

Let me hear from you before you depart home. My wishes and prayers will attend you both, that you may enjoy health, prosperity, and all earthly comforts, as far as they may be good for your eternal interests. I hope we may meet again in this world,—if not, may we meet where there are no sins nor seas to separate; where no enemy shall come in, and no friend go out. To this great end may we daily grow in grace, and in the love and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If you see dear Mr. Owen, thank him for his kind and interesting letter.

I am, my dear friends,
Your's very faithfully,
H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Macauley.

1818.

My dear Sir,

It is a good while since you and I have had any intercourse, except in that communion which is a sort of invisible intercourse among believers. We are, blessed be God, getting on, but still keeping our room for the fourth week, and every two or three days have a sort of fresh attack, though milder. On Sunday I was very ill; we persist in

Digitized by Google

keeping profoundly quiet. P. is much shattered; yet a day or two of ease sets up her spirits.

I suppose —— is now just entering on his new career. He has my cordial prayers. I compare the sending a boy to a public school or college, to the act of the Scythian mothers, who threw their new-born children into the sea; the greater part of course were drowned, but the few who escaped with life, were uncommonly strong and vigorous.

I have been regretting, foolishly enough, that some of my earliest and dearest friends did not live to promote and rejoice in the wonderful prosperity of such of our religious institutions as each particularly delighted in. Dean Tucker, Dr. Kennicott, and Bishop Horne, would have been among the most zealous supporters of the conversion of the Jews, as Dr. Johnson would of the Slave Abolition, and the Bible and Missionary Societies. Bishop Porteus would have rejoiced in the prosperity of all, as would dear Venn and H. Thornton. To descend to so poor a thing as myself and my writings, the gratification I feel in that measure of success which it has pleased God to grant unworthy me, when so many abler and better persons have been neglected, is much diminished by the loss of all the above-named, and many others, who would have taken a warmer interest in what concerned me than it deserved, and that from partial kindness. But all this is necessary, and salutary, and right.

We have many substantial comforts. Two of our first scholars at Cheddar, whom we taught their letters thirty years ago, died last week. They

Digitized by Google

became remarkably pious at fourteen years old. I went to see them just before I was taken ill. One of them had prospered in life, and married another of our pious school-boys, who became afterwards a good tradesman. I never attended a more edifying dying-bed. With ulcerated lungs and inflammation of the liver, she discovered something more than resignation: it was a sort of humble grateful triumph; she was obliged to pray against impatience for death, so ardent was her desire to be with her Saviour. Oh, how I envied her! there was no heated imagination; she was happy on good grounds. I write this for your children.

My friend Lysons has sent me his *Abridgment of Jeremy Taylor's Sermons;* he has left out the Greek, and Latin, and the classical allusions; but I fear he has not improved the spirituality. He seems to have used the knife too much. Those three glorious sermons on Christ's Second Advent, he has reduced to one short one.

Your's ever, my dear friend,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

1818.

My very dear Friends,

I do really think that Thursday's and Saturday's carriers brought nearly thirty pamphlets, tracts, and reports. Alas! I shall never find time even to read their titles; among others, *three thick volumes* from Mrs. ——. Life is short, and books are long,

Digitized by Google

and of reading, as well as writing many books, there is no end! I was rewarded, however, the same day, by an agreeable letter from Sir W. Pepys; it was very rich in pious sentiments. As a proof that he mixes works with his faith, he enclosed a handsome gift for our poor. On Monday we had ordered dinner early, that we might have the afternoon for Shipham affairs. Just as we were sitting down, arrived a carriage full of company, and most of them strangers. As our object in going out, however, was to learn from good Mr. Perry the result of a Justice-meeting at Langford, which had promised to look into the grievances of Shipham, &c, I took courage, and after dinner told the company that we were under the necessity of hurrying away at five o'clock; off we went, leaving them to the full enjoyment of their tea and coffee, and the roses and the honeysuckles. Something, though very little, was done for the poor miners. It was pay-day at their club a few days since, and nearly every woman in both parishes was in arrear eighteen-pence or two shillings; non-payment was final exclusion, and exclusion total ruin; so by begging, borrowing, and giving, we cleared off their debts. Mr. Boak, who was so kind as to represent us at Cheddar Club Feast, gave us last night a delightful report; it was a happy day to a hungry but clean and well-behaved party of a hundred and fifty, and twelve new members had the *honour of a sitting.*

I have just received a letter from the Religious Tract Society at Paris; they express themselves

Digitized by Google

anxiously desirous of printing my tracts, not for the poor, but in an elegant form, and write to ask my advice and assistance; they keep the thing at present a profound secret, as it is a nice thing to manage, on account of *papistry*. I have so many more things required of me in a variety of ways than I am equal to, that I have proof enough that this is not my rest. I want to 'keep silence even from *good* words.' Think over the tract business, and suggest what occurs—which would you recommend? What think you of advising some chapters of Practical Piety, &c. to be printed separately, or two or three together? I am called down to company. I cannot conclude with a better finale than that of the Apostle, "I commend you to God, and the word of his grace."

Ever your's most affectionately,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.[1]

1818.

My dear Sir,

Few things could have gratified me more than your very kind letter, more especially as it announced the promise of the only thing better than a letter, a visit from you. Most delighted indeed shall we be to see you here; but everything in this world that is pleasant is short, and we lament that you will be able to stay so short a time. 'Half a

[1] Now Bishop of Calcutta.

Digitized by Google

loaf,' however, as I have very logically proved, 'is better than no bread;' we shall therefore expect to see you, if it so pleases the Disposer of all events, on Monday evening, the 14th of June, that is, if you have not worked yourself to death before then.

Our eyes and hearts too were brimful of the *sainte semaine* in London. If the reading of the prosperous state of all these blessed institutions is so exhilarating, what must it be to witness them! These have been pleasures out of my reach, but my interest in them is not lessened by the want of personal participation. I shall pity you when you come, you will be so teased and tired by questions; but it is among my follies that I am so animated by the sight of a friend long desired, and from whom I intend to get all manner of information, that from mere excitement I do nothing but talk, when I had resolved to do nothing but listen.

I hope your beloved family are quite well, especially the little invalid.

My poor sister is always a great sufferer; my health is rather better than usual, I bless God, except that I sleep wretchedly; but if I have "wearisome nights," I know that they are "appointed me."

Adieu, my dear Sir, do not forget sometimes to pray for

Your very obliged, and faithful,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

Barley Wood, 1818.

MY DEAR SIR,

If my friends judge of my feelings by the punctuality of my correspondence, they will not take a fair estimate of them. The misfortune (to myself at least) is, that most of my letters go to persons whom I have never seen, and most of my days are taken up by visitors whom I do not know. Time is passing away, and I am passing away with it, but as these incessant interruptions are chosen *for* me; and not *by* me, I bear them as well as I can, though I extremely regret that I have so little time for reading and thinking. Bad nights, however, help me out very much in the latter article.

Your very interesting and affecting letter deserved to be acknowledged; I am sure it was felt, and truly do we sympathize with you and the sorrowing mother in witnessing the sufferings of this dear babe:—Poor fallen nature! We seem to sigh ere we have learnt to sin. I wish I could hope she was relieved, or—forgive me, if I say—released: certainty is surely less terrible than this living death.

I must add the following to your anecdotes of a Parisian life. A lady who very properly attended her husband to France, who went in an official character, soon after her arrival wrote to a friend saying how very painful every thing she saw and heard was to her: the levity, the round of pleasure,

Digitized by Google

the desecration of the Sabbath ;—in short, the whole frivolous and vicious routine ;—her life was such that she longed to return home. About a year after, they were recalled to London. Before her departure, she wrote to the same friend, that she was grieved to be forced to quit a place so truly delightful, and that she should not leave without the deepest regret, those amiable people whom, perhaps, she might see no more! This very lady had frequently said, that English women were held in such abhorrence by the Parisians, that she was obliged to dress like a French woman to escape insult. So it is when we cultivate familiarity with sin ;

'We first endure, then pity, then embrace.'

Though it is expecting a rare union of opposite qualities, I hope our friend C——'s work will be at once powerful and prudent.

We had four gentlemen here last week, lately from Rome, and all reported the Pope's disappointment in the high opinion he had formed of English ladies; they were quite sunk in his esteem.

Your notion, that the doctrine of the association of ideas might be turned to a religious account, I highly approve. It is a fertile subject, and less hackneyed than many others. You do not want any such notices as I could give, even were my mind more disengaged than it is. I have got an old book on 'The Government of the Thoughts,' by a Dean Fullier. I have not looked into it these thirty years, but if I remember right, there was some good matter in it. I wish I could convey it to

Digitized by Google

you. Suppose you come and fetch it, and advocate the *great cause* at our Bible Anniversary, the 9th of July. I might then have, what I never have had, the privilege of hearing you speak at a public meeting.

Your very faithful friend,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

Barley Wood.

My dear Sir,

The Bishop of Gloucester has told me of your most touching affliction. I cannot forbear offering you my true sympathy, though it is worth nothing. These things shew us the impotence of human friendship,—that it can *only* sympathize. But, oh! the thought that she is safe,—that she is now one of the blessed number that surround the throne! You lately pitied her in her sufferings; she now, perhaps, pities you in your sorrow, or rather wonders why you sorrow, because she is so happy. We mourn for the mourning mother, but I know she "will not sorrow as one without hope," for she has contributed an additional pure spirit to the heirs of a blessed immortality.

Accept the poor prayers of your faithful,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

MRS. HANNAH MORE was visited in the autumn of this year with an alarming illness, in which her sister Martha could afford her no relief, as her own state still more clearly marked the approach of the closing scene. A letter from Mrs. Hannah More to Mr. Wilberforce, presents a picture at once sad and surprising, of mental and spiritual strength, contending with time and disease.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

Barley Wood, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Lest you should hear *circuitously*, and not hear *truly*, as was lately the case, I sit bolstered up in my bed, to write you a line. On Sunday, poor Patty was seized suddenly in the most alarming manner—a violent shivering fit, intense pains, and a half-sort of delirium, praying for the poor Queen,[1]

[1] Queen Charlotte.

Digitized by Google

whose want of spiritual attendance sat heavy upon her. She felt as if it was a struggle between life and death; she continued in this state all day and night, only her head became perfectly clear. We had yielded to the kind importunities of Mr. Harford, and had promised to go to him the next day. I made a great effort in the evening to read to the family, Fawcett's beautiful sermon, on "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." A few hours after Patty's seizure, I was attacked in nearly the same manner—a shivering fit of many hours, with such intense pains in my body and limbs, that my flesh seemed lacerated, as if cut with knives. After several hours the freezing fit (as might be expected) became a burning one, and I seemed to feel the pains of dissolution—with extreme nausea and giddiness. At length it resolved itself into a bilious fever, such as I have often had. I have been in bed the whole week, the pulse is quite reduced, and the worst symptoms, thanks to a merciful God! have subsided. Patty was out of bed yesterday; though she sleeps in the next room, we had not seen each other since the beginning of the week. Pray for us, my dear, very dear friend, that these useful warnings may not be neglected by us, but that they may answer the end for which they are generally sent—to quicken our repentance and preparation. My whole life, from early youth, has been a successive scene of visitation and restoration. I think I could enumerate twenty mortal diseases from which I have been raised up, without any consequent diminution of strength, except in an illness which happened

Digitized by Google

to me ten years ago, and which continued for nearly two years; yet (let me gratefully remember this,) that at near sixty, after this hopeless disease, I was restored to strength (physical strength) sufficient to write ten volumes—such as they are;—and in that long affliction, though at one time I very seldom closed my eyes in sleep for forty days and nights, I never had one hour's great discomposure of mind, or one moment's failure of reason, though always very liable to agitation. I repeat these mercies to you in order to impress them on myself as motives of never-ceasing gratitude to that merciful and long-suffering Father to whom I have made much unworthy returns. Patty, though emerging from this trial, is a poor shattered creature. She joins in affectionate and cordial prayers for you.

Your's most truly,

H. More.

This was written yesterday—my night has not been good, but I am not worse, and P. rather better.

If you hear nothing more, you may conclude that things are mending. But "When I awake up after His likeness, I shall be satisfied!"

The state of the two sisters determined their friends to suspend their visits to Barley Wood; and this considerate forbearance was attended with salutary effects on the health and spirits of Mrs. Hannah. The leisure and repose which she now for the first time for many years enjoyed, gave a new spring to her thoughts, and turned them on the existing state of society. Every short interval of im-

Digitized by Google

proved health, brought with it a feeling of obligation to make it answer a beneficial end. She had often said she would write no more, but her ardour in the cause of religious truth, and the happiness which flows from it, determined her to expend her little stock of strength, in exposing certain dangerous errors in opinion and practice, by which society was at that juncture disturbed and disfigured; and in this new aggression upon folly and vice, she soon made it apparent that age had abated nothing either of the rapid flow of her ideas, or her facility in expressing them. The book, which it was intended should not much exceed the size of a pamphlet, soon grew under her hands into a thick volume, which appeared within a few months after its commencement, under the title of *Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners, Foreign and Domestic; with Reflections on Prayer.*

She observed to a friend, when speaking, with her accustomed modesty, of the small merit of her writings,—that the only remarkable thing which belonged to her as an author, was, that she had written eleven books after the age of sixty.

On the publication of her *Moral Sketches*, the same testimony was given as on former occasions, of the estimation in which her writings were held, by the whole of the first edition being sold on the day of its appearance, while very few of the country booksellers could obtain a supply. It appears, too, to have fulfilled the expectation which it had raised, and to have obtained at least as ample a share of the public approbation, as any one of its predecessors.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Miss Roberts.

1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We have, I think, not been so quiet for many years as since my last illness; we literally see nobody.

I had just written the last sentence, saying we saw *nobody*, when, who should call, but the Bishop of Gloucester; of course this was an exempt case.

For fear I should forget it, let me know, when you go to the fountain head, if we have really, as the papers announce, added to our French sins the foolery of a French theatre.

You will not, I think, when you see Cadell, express to him *your admiration of my sweet portrait*, but rather inquire, if no steps can be taken for its suppression.

Mr. —— has been to hear Mr. Daniel Wilson, and was greatly penetrated with the sermon. We have just heard, and I trust *de bon part*, that the king of Prussia is becoming pious, and that six clergymen preach the gospel decidedly at Berlin.

When we have no interruption, I write about five hours a-day, but it is truly what the late Duke of Cumberland said, when he saw Gibbon at work on his laborious history, 'Scribble, scribble, scribble!' I believe I shall make a very honest volume as to the *quantity* of paper and printing, but a very cheating one as to the *matter*. You will hardly be able to read this, which I have scrawled by candle-light. It is a great loss to me that I can make no

Digitized by Google

use of the second half of the day, except by knitting, which is perhaps the portion best employed. We talked of you much on Sunday, when our little household was obliged to keep church at home. You, I imagine, were reduced to the same necessity. The snow here was very deep, and the avalanches which fell from the roof, have demolished the treillage on the east-side; so Charles has fitted up a carpenter's shop in the servants' hall, and is sawing out his timbers for a job, which, I fear, is too mighty for him; but he thinks otherwise.

May God bless, preserve, and restore you in safety, prays,

Your affectionate,

H. More.

P. S. When you see Lady Lilford, remember us most kindly to the house of Powys; I consider that excellent family as quite providentially placed at Clifton.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

1819.

My dear Friend,

I have been long wishing, as in duty bound, to transmit to you the thanks, both my own and those of the naked, the hungry, and the ignorant, whom you have been the instrument of clothing, feeding, and instructing, this year! May God increase his mercies to you for the mercy you have shewn to others! You may justly say, 'if you wished to

Digitized by Google

write to me, why then did you *not* write?' The newspapers will probably have told you why, and I am sorry that you should learn from them, before you heard from me, that I have been guilty of the weakness, at my age, of doing that imprudent and presumptuous thing, writing a book. I had fully resolved, as became me, to commit no more indiscretions of this sort; but I have broken, as did *not* become me, my resolution. Though living in retirement, falsely so called, I see so many people from every point of the compass, that I find there is a fresh crop of errors sprung up in a quarter where we did not so much look for them, namely among the religious, or rather the *professing* part of the world. Mine is a book which, in addition to its being feebly written, will bring me no small discredit, as well with the grave as the gay. For one part of it, I expect to have the whole fashionable world, at least all that part of it who look into a grave book, falling upon me without mercy. But I can't help it; I have really seen and heard so much of the evils arising, and likely to arise, from the epidemic French mania, that "while I was musing, the fire burned, and at last I spake with my" pen. You will, I fear, think I have been too strong, but when I see our country almost abandoned in this second assault upon its safety, and millions spent abroad, while our poor have been perishing at home, I could not restrain my feelings. The rage for a Paris excursion has spread such a general infection, that curates, and even farmers in our part of the world, have caught the

Digitized by Google

malady. A clergyman with ten children has been twice, and his wife is now left there, with a house full of daughters, that they may bring home the Parisian accent to a little country village! I hope this impudent book will have the honour to wait upon you in about a fortnight.

I have told you a *bold* thing of my doing, I will now tell you a *gay* thing. What do you think of my entertaining one hundred and twenty gentlemen and ladies at dinner last week, and about two hundred at tea? The superior part of the company which attended a Bible meeting in our village, adjourned afterwards by invitation, to Barley Wood. It was a beautiful day. Tables were laid in the garden, prodigal of flowers; the collation was a cold one, but such as took two days to cook. We had, besides our neighbouring gentry, many persons from Clifton, and forty clergymen of the establishment; and the white-robed nymphs made with the groups under the trees the prettiest show imaginable. You will judge that my health is improved by my being able to go through such a serious fatigue. The success of these societies I have much at heart: sometimes we hear of 'Christian Knowledge Societies' opposed to 'Bible Societies;' but I belong to both parties: I wish there was no such thing as party.

This foolish book has so engaged me, (for I only thought of it a few months ago,) that the last volume of Clarke's Travels, the voyage to Ashantee, and Chalmers's Sermons, all lie on my table with leaves uncut! I wish I had thought

Digitized by Google

of my book sooner, for this is a wretched time of year to bring it out, as I suppose the town is empty, but I may not live to another year, so I preferred publishing it with all its faults. I hope it pleases our heavenly Father to continue to you those many blessings for which you frequently express such lively gratitude; and that you may continue to enjoy his grace, which is the crown of all his other blessings, is the cordial prayer of,

My dear Sir William,

Your very attached
and faithful friend,
H. More.

P. S. My most affectionate respects to Lady Pepys. The young race, of course, have all forgotten me, but I have not forgotten the energy with which your eldest son, *at seven years old*, ran into the drawing-room and said to me, 'After all, Ferdinand would never have sent Columbus to find out America, if it had not been for Isabella. It was entirely her doing.'

From H. R. H. the Princess Sophia of Gloucester to Mrs. H. More.

Ranger's House, Blackheath,
Aug. 28, 1819.

I have been as much gratified, my dear Mrs. More, by the perusal of your last valuable publication, as I was flattered by your kind attention in sending

Digitized by Google

it to me; and with heartfelt satisfaction do I express my best thanks to you for having furnished me with this opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with one whom I both respect and admire.

Often have I recalled the hours in which I had the happiness of hearing you converse in the presence of my revered mother, who so truly appreciated your virtues. And I beg to assure you that I have traced with pleasure in every page of your last work the same animated style of remark; therefore I must add, that the increase of years to which you allude, my dear Madam, is *only* manifested by an augmented keenness of perception, which has had a copious field for enlargement, owing to the multiplicity of political and extraordinary events of every description with which these latter years have abounded. That you endeavour to turn your observations towards the good of our own sex is truly beneficial; and above all that *your own* humility may become a lesson to *all* your countrywomen is most desirable, for *that* virtue is indeed the ground-work of genuine Christianity. As one who sincerely loves her country, I must acknowledge my sense of your meritorious exertions, and with these sentiments, and those of the highest esteem, I remain,

My dear Mrs. More,

Your's ever affectionately,

SOPHIA MATILDA.

Digitized by Google

From Dr. Mansell[1] to Mrs. H. More.

Trinity College Lodge, Sept. 6, 1819.

MADAM,

Having been very much indisposed of late, I have been unable, till now, to say, how much gratified and honoured I am, by receiving from yourself, a copy of your incomparable 'Moral Sketches.'

I wish I knew how sufficiently to express the estimation in which I hold any attention from you, to whom the world has so long looked up for instruction, and by whom it has been so ably and eloquently taught, that there is something far beyond a *name* in religion and virtue.

My veneration for you, Madam, is infinitely too great to allow me any thing like an *approach* to flattery; and I am convinced that I do but speak the language of the better part of the world, when I say that you have indeed used the ten talents with which God has been pleased to intrust you, to a great and glorious end; that you have made them exclusively subservient to his honour and service; and, during a life of unvarying attention to the best interests and happiness of your fellow-creatures, have, at least as much as any one now living, laboured to bring many to salvation. It is, therefore, to be humbly hoped, that those talents so employed for the best and noblest purposes in this life, will be the source of endless felicity to you in another.

[1] Late Bishop of Bristol, and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Digitized by Google

With the most respectful and sincere wishes of my family and myself, for the continuance of a life so essential to the furtherance of every thing good, I have the honour to remain,

My dear Madam,

Your very faithful, obedient, and humble servant,

W. BRISTOL.

But the honest pleasure which Mrs. H. More began to derive from the favourable reception of this work, and from the pious and authorised expectation of its beneficial influence, was now to be exchanged for feelings of a very different kind. About a month after the appearance of 'Moral Sketches,' it pleased Him "who giveth and taketh away," to deprive her, after an illness of only four days, of her best beloved and sole surviving sister, Mrs. Martha More,—her zealous coadjutor in all her charitable labours, the judicious promoter of all her wishes and designs, the tender nurse and soother of her sickness, and the enlivening and intelligent companion of her healthier hours. To be bereaved, after so short a warning, of one whose eyes had for so many years met her's with delight, whose bosom had been the depository of all her interior sentiments, and whose counsel had been her best human support in frequent seasons of agitation and conflict, was a dispensation that summoned all her fortitude into action, and put to the test the temper of her Christian armour. The conflict was very sharp, and "she would utterly have fainted, but that she believed verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the

Digitized by Google

land of the living;" and that goodness she lived to experience in a calm and trusting composure, which was her companion to her latest hour, filling the 'aching void' caused by the loss of all her four sisters, and comforting her on every side.

When first she gazed upon the world after this last bereavement, the peopled scene must have seemed to her a wide desert; standing in the midst of which, she had no stay but Him who comes to the pious soul with a fresh approximation as each competitor is withdrawn, until he sits enthroned within the inner circle of its affections. It was a spectacle as touching as it was solemn, to see this Christian lady thus gathering her resources towards their proper centre, and turning to the best account every adverse circumstance. In a strict sense the neighbourhood could hardly be said to sympathize with her in the sad event, for to every one it was a personal and peculiar sorrow,—each appearing to have lost a sister as well as herself.

The character of this common sister of all the friendless, and this common friend of all the virtuous who came within the range of her philanthropy, has been drawn with a faithful pencil by one[1] who well knew and felt her worth, in a letter to a friend of the family then on a visit at the house of mourning.

'We find it difficult to realize the solemn fact, and still more so to acquiesce in it. I think I have never known a character combining more

[1] The Rev. John Hensman, of Clifton.

Digitized by Google

of those qualities which are calculated to delight and improve, with such an absence of all that is disagreeable and repulsive. You have had the best opportunity of knowing her excellences; how kind, and generous, and noble a heart she possessed, how divested she was of self, how considerate towards others, how indefatigable in her labours to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of her fellow-creatures, how ardent in her wishes and prayers for the extension of the kingdom of her Redeemer. I have seldom conversed with her without being struck with the tenderness of her feelings in reference to every subject and every event in which the honour of Christ and the spiritual welfare of mankind were involved, and often have I secretly wished that I had a heart like her's. We occasionally see instances of piety in old age which command our veneration, but how rarely have we seen at that period such warmth of heart, with such attractive charms. There was something so indescribably delightful in her society, that I always found it difficult to take my leave of her. But if she was so dear to us, what must she have been to her bereaved sister! Indeed it is most painful to reflect how irreparable to her is the loss; how impossible it is for any to supply her place. God can indeed, by the rich communications of his grace, fill up the void. I doubt not that he will do it, and rejoice in your account of the peacefulness and resignation of Mrs. More's mind. All of us, I am sure, are bound to remember her in our prayers. But she does not sorrow as one with-

Digitized by Google

out hope. She can never think of her invaluable sister without feelings of gratitude and comfort. To have enjoyed for so many years the affectionate attention and aid and counsel of such a sister,—to have been herself a happy instrument in forming her character to such excellences,—to have been associated with her in labours so eminently blessed by God, are strong grounds of thankfulness. To have witnessed the peace and blessedness of her latter end,—to anticipate an indissoluble union with her hereafter, will surely mitigate the anguish of the separation. I trust that she will be enabled to exemplify that submission to the will of God which she has so well taught to others, and of which, peace is the invariable concomitant.'

During the sickness of her sister, and after her decease, letters replete with encomiums upon her last work, and acknowledgments of the acceptable service she had once more rendered to the cause of sound and practical religion, were continuing to pour in upon Mrs. More from a variety of quarters; but human applause had lost its power to please. She had chiefly valued it as affording delight to her faithful friend and sister, and nothing now remained to comfort and encourage her as an author but the humble hope of a blessing upon her labours, to be manifested in their effect on the sentiments, principles, and habits of her country.

Some of the correspondence produced by this painful event, as it cannot fail to interest the reader, shall here be presented to his notice.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Mrs. Macauley.

Barley Wood, 1819.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I have reproached myself almost hourly, for not having caused a letter to be written to you, thanking you for the kindness of your's, but I foolishly put it off from one day to another, thinking it would be more satisfactory to you to have a line from my own hand; but I have been, and still am, so much indisposed both in health and spirits, that I have not been able to answer one of, I suppose, fifty letters of condolence. My eyes, too, are so bad, that when I wake in the morning, I lie for hours without knowing whether it is day or night. I do not gain much ground either in body or mind, but I hope the former is most in fault. The truth is, I was so ill the last three days the Wilberforces stayed, as not to be able to go down stairs. *She*, dear soul, *would* attend them to Cheddar, Brockley Combe, &c. I believe it heated and harassed her, but all was God's will, and be that will obeyed. She came to my bedside at eleven at night, and said, 'they are all gone to bed, and our W—— and I have had a nice hour's chat.' In an hour and half after this, she awoke in the pangs of death. After agonies unspeakable, and shrieks which rent my heart, she sunk for eight or ten hours into total insensibility, with all the marks of a corpse on her countenance. We sent for our dear Dr. Lovell, who scarcely left us while she lived.

Digitized by Google

Whether rational or delirous, her expressions all indicated a strong faith in her crucified Saviour. She was at times perfectly composed,—said she had done but little for God, but had never trusted in any thing she *had* done. A few hours before her departure, she rambled a good deal, but in a quiet way, full of piety and charity, ordering shoes and stockings for the poor, &c. I received her last breath, when she sweetly slept in Jesus without a sigh or groan; her countenance in her coffin was lovely. The Bishop of Gloucester and Mr. Wilberforce kindly offered to come from Wells, to attend her poor remains to their narrow cell, but the offer came too late: They had "buried my dead out of my sight," fearing a sudden change. I wish you could have seen how happy she looked. I need not tell you that my grief is exquisite; but my consolations are great, and I trust that not one rebellious thought has risen in my heart. On the contrary, I enumerate my many mercies;—that she was spared to me so long,—that she had been in such a constant state of preparation,—that my grief is not aggravated by any doubt of her present happiness,—that *she* has gained much more than *I* have lost. I *endeavour* also to be thankful that *she* is spared the sorrows I now feel.

Never was any private person's death more lamented. She has been the subject of four or five funeral sermons. There was not a dry eye in the churches. Most of the neighbours are in deep mourning. I am afraid it will kill good old Jones. I dare not see him. We have worked thirty-two

Digitized by Google

years together. Oh! pray for me, that this reflection may quicken me in my spiritual course.

I hope you get good accounts of Mr. M. and D——. God bless you, my dear friend.

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to a Friend.

My very dear Friend,

It gives me great concern that I have been obliged so long to delay thanking you for the kind sympathy you expressed for the irreparable loss I have sustained. I trusted to our excellent friend Mr. Hensman, who I knew would have the goodness both to give you the melancholy details of the sad event, and to explain to you the various causes which concurred to prevent my writing. I believe I received not less than two hundred letters, the greater part of which were answered by some friends, but many still remain unacknowledged.

I may now indeed say "My house is left unto me desolate!" I bless my heavenly father, however, that he has not left me without consolation and support. And when I reflect on *her* immense gain, I am ashamed to dwell so much on my own loss. She had a true friendship for you. You knew her well, and knew how much she deserved to be loved; how much she must necessarily be lamented. In my affliction I endeavour to keep my mercies before my eyes. I find not one reason for murmurs; but many for thanksgiving. She was enabled, after a life of devotedness to God, to bear her dying tes-

Digitized by Google

timony to his faithfulness and truth. I feel thankful that she is removed from a world of pain and suffering, of sin and sorrow, to that blessed state purchased for her by him who loved her, and gave himself for her; that she indeed sleeps in Jesus. Her last words were expressive of her strong Christian hope. She repeatedly renounced all dependence on herself, or her works, and declared she looked for salvation only to a crucified Saviour. When a friend pitied the excruciating pain she was suffering, she said, 'Oh, I love my sufferings, they come from God, and I love every thing that comes from him.'

Shall I mourn for such a death? and yet I cannot but mourn deeply. The remainder of my pilgrimage, however, must be short. I pray that I may be enabled to spend the remaining portion of life better than I have done the past; and I believe she was taken from me, in order to quicken my repentance and preparation. My chief earthly support was removed, that I might lean more entirely on God.

I hope you have resisted the severe winter with which we invalids have been tried. I have just got out of my room, after six weeks' confinement from an attack on my chest. You have my best wishes and cordial prayers, for your health, peace, and comfort here; and if we do not meet again in this world, I trust we shall in that better state, where there is neither sin, nor sorrow, nor separation. Believe me ever, my dear friend,

Your truly faithful and affectionate,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From the Rev. Daniel Wilson to Mrs. H. More.

September, 1819.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

The account which I have just heard from the public journals, of the recent affliction in your family, induces me at once to write you a hasty line of sincere remembrance and affectionate sympathy. The departure, indeed, of a sister so well prepared for a future world, and whose humble faith and hope had disarmed death of its terrors, must have been to herself an unspeakable gain; but to the survivor the loss must be most sensibly painful; and the more so, in proportion to the many excellent qualities and graces which adorned her Christian character. I assure you, my dear Madam, I feel deeply for you, and shall not cease to pray that God our Saviour, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier, may pour forth upon you the abundance of his mercy. Whatever comforts we may have received from the creature, came still from the Creator, and dwell essentially and inexhaustibly in him; and one lesson to be derived from the separations and griefs of this fading world, is to repose our joy more entirely on God in Christ Jesus, as our eternal portion, and never-failing refuge. I was engaged in reading over with care, a second time, the work which you have had the goodness to send me, when I received the tidings of your loss. My time is so miserably parcelled out by perpetual engagements, and so interrupted by, and crossed (though I wish to see

Digitized by Google

even in these appointments a heavenly discipline) with unnumbered disconcerting incidents, that I believe I had better say at once that I was highly delighted, and I trust edified by the perusal of it. All the remarks on foreign concerns, (the part which I have read twice,) I warmly approve. The observations on the character of Louis XIV. are most just and important. The observations on Madame du Deffand and Marmontel, are highly valuable. I doubted only whether the names should have been given;—young persons are always so ready to read a prohibited book: but I imagine it was necessary. The example of English ladies wanted, I thought, more of detail and care in the drawing up; and in the chapter of 'England's hope,' perhaps a more full and direct statement of the doctrines of the grace and sacrifice of our Lord, and the mighty influences of his Spirit, as the foundation and spring of all real virtue, might have been introduced. You perceive, my dear Madam, my high opinion of your sincerity in asking my opinion of your book, by the freedom of these remarks. The chapters on prayer are, throughout, most excellent; —that on devotion in the night, touched me much. Upon the whole, I should consider the work as fully equal to the Christian Morals and Practical Piety; though, I think, inferior to the 'Strictures' and 'St. Paul.' There are marks of haste upon it, which, in subsequent editions, you will probably remove. The excellences, however, incomparably preponderate. Scrutiny into the heart—detail of practical duty—detection of prevalent disorders

Digitized by Google

—fine and new observations on the tendency and developement of religious principle, all founded on the characteristic doctrines of Christianity, stamp a value upon the performance. It *must* do good, under God's blessing. It is on every table. The duty and expediency of the publication are, in my opinion, perfectly clear, and should be a subject of gratitude to God, the giver of all good. But, oh! how easy is it to preach and write, compared to what it is to love and obey. Every month I pass penetrates my mind more deeply with a sense of unworthiness, and of the necessity of further and more vigorous effort in "running the race which is set before me."

Ever your faithful,

D. WILSON.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

Barley Wood, Oct. 1819.

MY DEAR SIR,

I was much obliged by your very kind letter, though I have been prevented by sufferings, both of body and mind, from telling you so before. The former I am willing to hope has been the chief aggressor, for this corruptible body presseth down the soul. I am, however, a little better, in both respects, partly owing, perhaps to the prayers of the multitude of Christians who have sympathized in my sorrows in no common degree. I do not undervalue the kindnesses of human comforters, especially as they bear testimony to the worth of what

Digitized by Google

I have lost; for this pious sympathy is put into their hearts by Him, who is himself the only source of substantial consolation, and who has mercifully supported me under the heaviest trial which remained for me. Mine is simple, unmixed grief, not tinctured with any feeling of doubt or fear for the present state of my blessed sister; who was enabled to bear her dying testimony to the faithfulness of her God and Saviour. She repeatedly declared that she renounced all trust but in a crucified Redeemer, and called on every servant individually to look to the cross of Christ as the only hope and refuge. She was ill only four days. Mr. Wilberforce and family were with us when she was evidently seized for death; she had been long preparing for her great change; every scrap of paper I meet with confirms this, and in her pocket-book I found these words, 'This is the last account-book I shall ever want.' I have lost my chief earthly comfort, companion, counsellor, and fellow-labourer. God, doubtless, saw that I leaned too much on this weak prop, and therefore in mercy withdrew it, that I might depend more exclusively on himself! When I consider how infinitely greater *her gain* is than *my loss*, I am ashamed of my weakness. I can truly say, however, that it has not been mixed with one murmuring thought—I kiss the rod, and adore the hand that employs it. I do not so much brood over my loss as over the many mercies which accompany it. I bless God that she was spared to me so long; that her last trial, though sharp, was short; that she is spared

Digitized by Google

feeling for *me*, what I now *feel for her*; and though I must finish my journey alone, yet it is a very short portion of my pilgrimage which remains to be accomplished.

I hope the country air is strengthening you for your winter labours. What a state our country is in! But for the 46th Psalm, one's spirits would quite sink. The Bible and Missionary Societies are, I believe, at the bottom of these mischiefs. Satan could not bear their triumphant prosperity, and invented this counteraction; but, "greater is he that is for us, than he that is against us." I have seen hardly any body, and only in my chamber.

It grieves me that Lord Teignmouth should have been at Clifton a fortnight, without my being able to see him. I hope I shall soon.

Pray for your sincere and faithful servant,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Tryphena Bathurst.

Barley Wood, Oct. 9, 1819.

My dear Lady Tryphena,

Though I have nearly a hundred letters, (filled like your's with piety and kind condolence) unanswered, I cannot deny myself the gratification of thanking you for *your's*. My heavy affliction deeply affected my health, and I am still living in my room, my doctor scarcely allowing me to see any one, on account of the weakness of my chest, which suffers by talking.

Among my numerous letters, none has gratified

Digitized by Google

me more than your's, from the soundness both of judgment and principle it contains. Your account of my old friend Dr. Jackson's death, is affecting. That of my now blessed sister was highly instructive. She was ill only four days, and had been out all day to show the country to Mr. Wilberforce, who was staying here, and witnessed her almost dying pangs.

From the violence of fever, she wandered a good deal, but in every lucid interval bore her testimony to the goodness of God; said she had done little to show her love to her Redeemer; renounced all dependence on her best services, and declared she had no hope nor dependence but on a crucified Saviour. Your ladyship did not know her enough to be acquainted with her character, which was that of a most laborious, active, and self-denying Christian. In our numerous charity schools, she had exerted herself for thirty-two years with the most unwearied perseverance, and I may be allowed to add, (now she is gone,) with great success, in training up a number of useful members of the community, and many souls for heaven. Never was any private individual more lamented. Our poor weeping gardener said, 'She had made as many garments for the poor as Dorcas, and had as many tears shed over her death-bed.' Several funeral sermons were preached for her in the neighbourhood, and our neighbours have put on mourning.

I know I ought not to indulge myself in this strain over one so near to me, but I know also that your sympathizing heart will pardon the overflow-

Digitized by Google

ings of my sorrow. I bow, however, with entire submission to the divine will. My loss is little compared with *her* gain, and the remainder of my pilgrimage will be short. God had a right to resume his own gift; I bless him that he spared her to me so long.

I am glad Lady S—— is better. I need not say how happy I should be to have the honour of seeing you, should you come to Bath. If at all, I hope it will not be for some time, till my health shall enable me to profit by your kind intention.

I am pleased that you approve my book; it was written in great haste to meet the occasion. May it please God to give it his blessing, without which "nothing is strong, nothing is holy." It was so bad a time of the year for publishing, that my expectation of its reception was very low; but my bookseller, to my great surprise, writes, that though the distracted state of the country is peculiarly injurious to the sale of books, he is already about to publish a third large edition.

I mourn over the public state of the country. Can no punishment be found for the union of treason and atheism? I fear that not only among the vulgar, the English character is deteriorating. Home delights are losing their attraction. Yet it must be confessed that there is a wider diffusion of religion in the upper ranks, while on the other hand there is much restless dissipation. My most affectionate respects attend your whole party.

Dearest Madam,

ever your obliged and faithful,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. H. More to a Friend.

(Extract.)

1819.

My health has been very bad, and neither body nor mind has yet made much progress; the former, I hope, is most in fault, for, I bless God, my mind is, I trust, unrepining and submissive, though it is still very weak. I am forbidden by my doctor to see company, for which I am thankful, as I have no heart to see any but two or three particular friends in my own room. I spare myself entering on the details of her four dying days. They were exquisitely painful, but blessed be God, the trial was not long, and every interval of reason exhibited the strength of her faith and the resignation of her soul. She cast herself entirely on the mercies of God, and the merits of a crucified Saviour. I believe there never was an obscure individual more generally lamented. This is only gratifying as it leaves such a testimony to her worth. The kindness of the good is very soothing, but real consolation must come from a higher source. She has left the chief part of her property in charities and small legacies to a few friends, all to be paid after my death.

I suppose you knew the Wilberforces were here, and that she went to Cheddar with them, the very day before her mortal seizure attacked her! My complaint in my eyes must apologize for this scrawl. The sight is not endangered, thank God! We can pray for each other, and prayer is one

Digitized by Google

of the best offices of friendship. Dear Patty had long been much in prayer, and thought (though she never owned it to me) that her summons was at no great distance. May we all be united to her in God's own time!

Your's truly,

H. More.

From Lord Gambier to Mrs. H. More.

Iver Grove, Oct. 1819.

My dear Madam,

With heartfelt grief I have heard that it has pleased the Almighty Disposer of all things, to take your last most highly esteemed sister from you. Well do I know your entire resignation and submission to the Divine will, under every dispensation, and that you will readily say, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good;" but I cannot suffer an event so full of affliction and sorrow to you, to pass without my joining your numerous friends in sincere condolence with you, in your grief for the heavy loss you sustain in the deprivation of your valuable and beloved sister's company, and the comfort and assistance she gave you in your works of charity and faith, In these sorrowful events we recognize the season when the consolations of his grace and blessed word are most felt, and work with the greatest efficacy in the heart of the believer; may you experience in the fullest degree these

Digitized by Google

happy effects, and may our gracious Lord comfort and cheer your drooping heart with the presence of his Spirit, manifested to you in the most sensible way. But oh! what cause for rejoicing to you, that your beloved sister is gone to receive the bright reward of her faith in the blessed presence of her Redeemer, and "at his right hand where are pleasures for evermore." But how many will mourn her absence and their loss! And what mingled feelings of sorrow and joy must you have! May our blessed Lord support you with health and peace in your soul.

I remain, my dear Madam, with unfeigned regard and affection,

Your faithful and obliged Friend,

GAMBIER.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

Barley Wood, Oct. 25, 1819.

MY DEAR BOUNTIFUL FRIEND!

What shall I say to you for your repeated, your abundant liberality? If the blessing promised to "him who considereth the poor and needy" is great, may a large portion of that blessing rest on your head, and comfort your generous heart during the winter, when frost and snow bring the cold and hungry to your recollection.

Your large bounty has made me feel that my heart is still susceptible of joy. It has pleased God

Digitized by Google

to visit me with a loss as great as it is irreparable. My only remaining sister, the comfort of my life, whose principles, sentiments, and pursuits were so exactly my own, as almost to identify us, is taken from me, after four days' illness. The selfish feeling, that 'I must finish my journey alone,' will too much intrude, and sadden my oppressed heart, though I trust my deep sorrow is unmingled with any murmur. He who gave her, had a right to resume her, and I was enabled to say as I received her last sigh, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Her life had been most exemplary; and it is hard to say whether devotion (of a sober and earnest kind) or charity was the most striking feature in her character. Her death was such as I would desire for myself, and for every Christian friend. In her lucid intervals, she was constantly in prayer or praise; repeatedly declared she had a full, entire reliance on her Saviour, and renounced all trust in any thing else. When a friend, seeing her in extreme agony, pitied her, she answered, 'I love whatever comes from God, and therefore I love my sufferings.' The first verse of the 27th Psalm was frequently in her mouth. The habits of her mind, and of her life, were apparent to the last: in her delirium, she was perpetually crying out, 'be sure let that poor woman have her shoes—do not forget that old man's clothing,' &c.

As to my book, if it had not been finished before her death, it never would have been. I was so little in heart about it, that I blamed my bookseller for printing so large a first impression as fifteen hun-

Digitized by Google

dred; but to my great surprise he wrote me, that though from the state of the country there never was a season so unfavourable for the sale of books, he had put the second edition in circulation.

I remain,
Your very faithful and grateful,
H. More.

From Mr. Stephen to Mrs. H. More,

Kensington Gore, Nov. 7, 1819.

My dear Madam,

I should not have been slow to express my feelings on your late severe privation, if I had hoped that the early expression of them would have had any consolatory effect. When I consider how many of the first characters in the country, in every sense, but especially in the true sense—the eminently good, take a lively interest in your sorrows, and have probably done all that affectionate sympathy can do for your consolation, I feel it still almost presumptuous in *me* to intrude on you with the profession, that I also, in this instance, mourn with her who mourns; but I hear that Mrs. Macauley sets off for Barley Wood to-morrow, and I will not lose the opportunity of sending a few lines by her.

The heart must be hard or heedless, which, knowing all the circumstances of your loss, does not perceive in it a trial of much more than common severity; yet my own feelings of the same kind have enabled me, perhaps, to form a more adequate conception

Digitized by Google

of it than many of your friends can do. I say sufferings of the same kind, because, not to mention earlier sorrows, the loss I sustained three years ago was in name and form only different from your own. The moral excellence, the enlivening intellectual qualities, the acute sensibility, the close attachment, the perfect mutual confidence of which we have been deprived, were I believe, in both cases nearly the same; and the same aggravation belonged to both. Both losses were such as the world cannot repair to us.

But, my dear Madam, if experience enables me to estimate your sorrows aright, so does it also your consolations. In both cases, the separation must in the course of nature be very short, and in both cases (as I assuredly know in the one, and you, I doubt not, have equal assurance in the other,) the separation will terminate, as surely as religion is true, unless we fall off from their example, in a re-union of inconceivable felicity, and endless duration.

Well may we 'comfort one another with these words.' They amply sustain my heart, and I trust will be equally efficacious in your's.

Nature, however, is weak, and the spirits are weak in age. We must not, therefore, reject those inferior means of consolation and support which our heavenly Father has provided for us. I have thrown myself into the arms of my affectionate children; and you, I hope, will not shun those of many estimable friends, who regard you with filial reverence, and scarcely less than filial affection.

Digitized by Google

I will only add, may God bless you! my dear Madam, and cheer you with the delightful consciousness of his presence and favour during the remaining stage of your pilgrimage, and gently conduct you at last to those happy regions, where we shall forget all these sorrows, or remember them only with gratitude and joy, among the spirits of the just made perfect.

I am, my dear Madam,
Very respectfully and affectionately your's,
JAMES STEPHEN.

Mrs. More in these afflicting circumstances did not neglect the preservation of her health, nor did she so draw the curtain of her sorrow around her, as to shut out the wants, the comforts, or troubles of others from her view and her sympathy. She claimed none of the privileges of grief, and least of all the right of sequestration. To make others happy was in her so strong a propensity, that no considerations of private or personal indulgence could contract the scope of her practical philanthropy, or cool the fervours of her ardent mind. If she gave utterance to her sorrow, it was to make it instructive, by shewing its alliance with humble trust, and its subjection to spiritual discipline. But although her mind never sunk in sadness, her thoughts seemed to be much loosened from the world, and to travel in hope after her lost sister. Every interest and every event seemed to want the witness and the partner which gave it its value and its vivacity. The following letter, from

Digitized by Google

an intimate friend of the family, to a friend of her own, contains particulars which lay open the mind and character of Mrs. Martha More in a very striking and interesting manner.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In performing the melancholy task of looking over the papers of our dear departed friend, Mrs. Martha More, it was both edifying and affecting in a high degree to observe the religious feelings which mingled themselves in her most ordinary transactions. The greater part of her memoranda were interspersed with, or introduced by some little pious and profitable reflection; to mention one instance only, which just now occurs to me;—at the beginning of that side of her yearly account-book, which contained the items and amount of her annual charitable expenditure, was prefixed this sentence, 'May this account, through the influence of divine grace upon my heart, be increased every year, as every Christian woman's should be.' We found too, a precious little book, begun so long ago as the year 1805, filled with effusions of deep piety, evidently poured forth from a heart experimentally acquainted with the duties of self-examination, repentance, and prayer, and with the humility and faith which are the blessed results of those holy exercises; but I will extract a short specimen or two, which will give you a better idea of the excellent spirit which pervades it, than any thing I can say. 'Written in my bed-chamber at Bath, after being disgusted

Digitized by Google

with much metaphysical nonsense from the pulpit. I was shocked, that a minister of the gospel should dare so to deceive his auditors, who, I suppose from their general appearance, required, perhaps, more alarms than myself, from having had less sickness. What a universal deceit is every thing in this world! We deceive each other—we deceive ourselves—and above all, we endeavour to deceive the God who made us; the great searcher of hearts; him who pierces our inmost thoughts. We acknowledge by words, that he is all this; and we dare acknowledge it with gravity of countenance, whilst our practice convicts us of a contrary feeling. With an outward solemnity which adds to the enormity of the guilt, we audibly make this response to the minister, "I will say unto the Lord, thou art my hope and my strong hold, my God, in him will I trust." Have mercy on us, O Lord! every time we venture to repeat these words of the penitent Psalmist: How do we make the Lord our hope? by putting all our trust in Mammon: by devoting our time, our talents to him; by pursuing the pleasures and luxuries of this world with insatiable avidity; and giving the wearied cold refuse of our hearts into the hands of the Creator! We next call him our strong hold, when we do not even aim at a grasp. "My God, in him will I trust." Oh, that we did indeed put our whole trust and confidence in him, who is alone willing and able to support us! That he is able, we may confess with no great inconvenience; but that his *willingness* does not affect and rouse us to a more genuine love

Digitized by Google

of him, is indeed a sad subject of wonder. But let me not thus severely scrutinize the hearts of others, and be doubly condemned by the omissions and commissions of my own. God will, I hope, enable me to undeceive myself more and more every day; and in making my observations on the miserable sinners around me, to look with a jealous eye into the dirt and rubbish of my own heart, and to suffer his grace so to cleanse the inmost recesses of it, that he may find he is indeed "my only hope and my strong hold," and that in him alone I put my trust. That "the Lord loveth whom he chasteneth," hath been to me a subject of the sublimest consolation, for it has taught me to think with David, that "there is sprung up a light for the righteous, and joyful gladness for those that are true of heart." That my chastisement may conduct me, though at first by a glimmering light, yet at length to joyful gladness, when I become true-hearted, may God of his amazing goodness grant! through the blessed Redeemer.'

1785. 'Low-spirited and melancholy, oppressed with pain, and my mind overpowered with gloomy thoughts; I retired to my chamber, as is my common practice on these occasions, to turn over my Bible in pursuit of a suitable text. The following from the Lamentations particularly struck me, "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Jeremiah had known affliction, and therefore this sentence seems to come from him with peculiar grace. From the bottom of my soul do I believe it is with great unwillingness, that the

Digitized by Google

all-merciful God sends down afflictions, though upon such sinful creatures. This text seems most powerfully to confirm the following blessed assurance; "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The Lord *loveth!* Oh, who would not patiently endure chastisement, to be esteemed amongst the beloved of his God! May my afflictions sufficiently strengthen me boldly to ask my heart this question, and to stand the test when asked, "How dwelleth the love of God in me?" Dare I reply—by loathing vice—by loving virtue—by feeling the operations of his Holy Spirit daily strengthening my principles—by constantly depending on, and knowing the importance and the necessity of a Mediator—by feeling that the blessings of the gospel are pardon, assistance, and eternal life—by understanding that the terms on which they are offered are repentance, faith, and renewed obedience—by discovering that the design of Christianity is to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and to promote holiness? I am much raised by these thoughts, and am going down to join the family in good spirits. Who says that religion is gloomy? The unhappy creature who lives without a blessed ray of it in his heart!'

'In the beginning of January, 1790,' adds the same happy believer, 'we quitted Park Street for ever, after a long and prosperous reign of thirty years, successful in business, and happy in making many friends. Bad health led us to be satisfied with the moderate provision we had made, and we retired upon a plan to enjoy what

Digitized by Google

we were in possession of without waiting to grasp what we might not live to enjoy. It was an awful moment, and called aloud equally for repentance and thanksgiving! We had cause enough to lament duties omitted, or coldly performed; and, oh! what cause for gratitude and praise for mercies received. The state of my heart at this time is only known to the Almighty; but I trust I have felt many struggles and great desires for a fervent spirit of prayer and thanksgiving. Oh! may the gracious Lord of all continue his blessings in our retirement, and enable us never to forget from whom they flow. May we daily feel humbled more and more for past sins and omissions, and more and more earnest to be purified by the operations of grace, looking to the merits of the Redeemer as our only trust, and daily praying for strength, not to sink into indolence and luxury, or to surrender ourselves to the temptations of leisure; but to give at least a great portion of our opportunities to the use of our fellow-creatures, and the promotion of religion among the ignorant and uninformed; never forgetting that a part of our wealth is their's, as we are only stewards of the Giver of all. Grant these things, O Lord, for Christ's sake! Amen.'

Before I finish this subject, so full of melancholy, and yet of consolatory and instructive impressions, I must relate an affecting instance of genuine feeling manifested by the poor people of Shipham. They have long been accustomed (as I believe you know) to look to the inhabitants of Barley Wood,

Digitized by Google

and one or two other families, as their only resource in the extreme poverty, nearly amounting to famine, to which, by the scantiness of employment, they are frequently reduced; and their applications to this house for relief have consequently become so habitual, that, commonly, there scarcely passes a day without the arrival of some poor petitioner from that neighbourhood. For several weeks, however, after the death of our dear friend, their visits entirely ceased; and when at length upon the arrival of the Shipham schoolmaster with his donkey and paniers to carry off the annual donation of books for the schools, Mrs. Hannah More asked him how it was that they had so long entirely absented themselves, 'Why, Madam,' he answered, 'they be so cut up, that they have not the heart to come.' They remembered, (no doubt with affectionate gratitude,) not merely the unbounded liberality of her hand in giving, but the playful condescension with which she presided over their annual club, and their tea-drinkings; enlivening while she instructed them, and promoting cheerfulness and good humour in a manner peculiarly her own. And now, if you are pleased with this anecdote, so honourable to the private feelings of these poor miners, I think the instance of their patriotic principles, which I am going to relate, will complete your respect for their character.

During the late seditious proceedings, when distrust and alarm were springing up in so many parts of the kingdom, every single effective male inhabitant of Shipham came forward, beg-

Digitized by Google

ging permission to enrol himself in an association, if it were necessary, or at any rate requesting that their little community might send up an address, expressive of their horror of revolutionary principles, and their desire to prove their loyalty on any suitable occasion. The address was prepared, and sent up with the signature or *mark* of every individual, to Lord Sidmouth, accompanied with an intimation, that these were the same patriotic poor fellows, who, when the French landed at Fishguard some years since, were suddenly seen marching in military order to Bristol.

This address was presented to the Regent by Lord Sidmouth, who transmitted his thanks in a very handsome manner. I cannot help considering this as partly belonging to the fruits of the family's long and indefatigable exertions in this earliest scene of their Christian labours. It was singular and very pleasant to reflect that our dear departed friend had been enabled to visit the various schools during this her last summer upon earth, more frequently than her health had of late years permitted her to do, and had very recently made the tour of them, distributing, as Mrs. H. More relates, their annual rewards to more than thirteen hundred children and parents. The conduct of these poor men, which I have just been relating, affords surely a strong support to the argument, that instruction, especially religious instruction, is productive of loyalty. If distress is the exciting cause of insurrection, few have partaken more largely of it than these poor creatures, who indeed

Digitized by Google

from the stagnation of that branch of trade on which their subsistence depends, were some years ago nearly perishing, when Mrs. H. More, in conjunction with Mr. Hiley Addington, and a few benevolent gentlemen round the country, kept them from utter ruin, and afforded them employment, by purchasing weekly a certain quantity of the mineral for which they dig, which was laid up in a storehouse till the demand for it should revive. Mrs. H. More was considerably the largest capitalist in this trading concern. So much for the short and simple annals of the Shiphamites.

Our dear bereaved friend continues to drink largely at the only fountain of consolation, nor does she refuse to partake of those lesser streams which equally flow from the same divine goodness. We were much touched by what she said the other day to Lady Lilford and her daughters, who are among the few visitors she has yet been able to receive. 'Many people under a similar affliction, are apt to say that it is of too deep a nature to admit of consolation from the sympathy of friends. I am not of their opinion, I feel the sympathy of kind and Christian friends very soothing to my mind, and I bless God for affording me in his mercy and goodness, such a source of comfort.'

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

In this year (1819) all Mrs. More's patriotic Tracts and Ballads were collected into a volume. The turbulent and seditious proceedings which had disgraced the country in preceding years, were renewed with increased violence, and with many additional circumstances of atrocity which wore a portentous aspect. Nothing was found better adapted to counteract the poison administered with such wicked industry, than these little productions of Mrs. More's pen; nor did the deep private affliction under which she was at this time suffering, prevent her from pressing forward to meet these public dangers, with her bow ready strung, and her quiver on her shoulder, at the age of seventy-five.

After an interval of some months, we find the following letter from her to two of her friends.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

Barley Wood, Feb. 1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Faire des heureux, is among the happiest occupations in a world filled with sin and sorrow; and such a moment I have just enjoyed through your kindness. Had you seen the poor woman's rapture and surprise, you would have been gratified. 'Silent when glad,' she could not express her gratitude. I should have written sooner, had I not been hindered by company almost every morning. Mr. H—— came with a pious daughter of Lord E——, and her very excellent husband. It was pleasing to see one of the finest men I ever beheld, a young sea officer, deeply religious, and well-informed in spiritual things. Lady Cremorne tells me dear Mrs. Kennicott is better in her mind, from a paralysis in her leg; what a remedy! I lament the state of the blind saint, but 'so much the more,' I doubt not, does 'the celestial light shine inward.'

What times we live in! Clement, Ravilliac, Guy Faux, Bellingham, were petty villains compared with those by whom we are surrounded. When I used to hear of any fresh atrocity during the French revolution, I was silly enough to say, 'Well, this could not have happened *here!* This could not have been done by *Englishmen!*' How foolish! as if man without the grace of God were not *every where* the same corrupt being, drinking in iniquity like water. The Marchioness of Thomond has given

Digitized by Google

me some entertainment; she has sent me two dialogues, written by her uncle, Sir Joshua Reynolds; supposed to have passed, one between Sir Joshua and Johnson, the other between Johnson and Gibbon. The aim of both is to show that Johnson always considered Garrick as his private property, and would let nobody praise or abuse him but himself. In the dialogue with Reynolds he abuses him. With Gibbon he extols him to the skies. The sentiments, the style, the manner, are so happily hit off, that it brings all the interlocutors before me.

'Dodwell's Tour in Greece' has just arrived; two magnificent quartos; a present from Lady O. Sparrow. We have read little in it; it seems to be purely classical, like Eustace; and though the ruins of all that was once so renowned, must be delectable to *see*, yet they are less interesting to *read of*, especially to me, whose taste is the very reverse of Hamlet's, for 'man delights me and woman too,' more than things or scenes. The plates are exquisite. In a portfolio one often sees such; but I have rarely seen any so finely executed in a printed book. You must rub up your Greek and your virtu, and come and see them. I cannot hear of a school-mistress: what think you of my taking the place? I can teach poor children, and I know a little French.

I have begun to-day the new and most painful task of preparing the school rewards, and turn my thoughts to this foolish letter to draw them off from sad recollections. I am tolerably well, but have not broken prison yet, for I cough if I only cross

Digitized by Google

to the opposite chamber; but 'all my state shall ——declare unto you.'

Your's always most affectionately,

H. More.

Mrs. H. More's health, to the extreme concern of the many who loved and admired her, appeared at this time to be sinking rapidly: she was prevented from leaving her chamber throughout the whole spring and summer of 1820, by a succession of severe and alarming attacks of illness, till at length, in the month of August, she experienced so violent a seizure as to excite, for many successive days, the most serious apprehensions for her life, and from which, even after the more immediate danger appeared to be past, there remained but a faint hope of her complete recovery.

During this distressing interval, those friends who had the opportunity of watching her sick bed, were careful to gather up what fell from her lips while under the impression of approaching dissolution.

On the night of the 12th of August, Mrs. H. More called all the family out of their beds around her own, being seized with an obstinate obstruction on the chest, which for some time resisted every endeavour to remove it. Upon recovering her speech, after repeated faintings, she earnestly requested the prayers of the friend who was supporting her head, and at intervals, as she was able, repeated a great part of the xvith Psalm, with a little alteration to make it speak the better to her

Digitized by Google

own soul: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, for thou *didst* not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." She went on, "Thou shalt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." She repeated also most of the xxiiird Psalm, and desired to have some verses here and there from the cxixth, read to her. She then exclaimed, 'Oh! my gracious God, help me, a poor sinner!' She was answered, 'He will give strength for all need,' to which she replied, 'I have no doubt of it. Life is of no value upon the terms I have held it for the last eleven months. If it were his good pleasure, I could hope that my sufferings may not be very tedious, but I dare wish for nothing that is not consistent with his blessed will.' Upon another occasion, Miss Frowd, the tender friend who was chiefly with her at this period, having said, 'I trust you will be better to-morrow:' she answered, 'If it be God's will, I hope so; when, where, and as thou wilt, O Lord! I who have written so much upon submission to the will of God, ought now to practise it.' To her physician who attended her, she said, 'This old crazy building is a long time in breaking up, doctor!—A gentle dismission, if it please God!' Part of the xlist Psalm being repeated to her, beginning, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy," &c. She said, 'A beautiful Psalm! but all my trust is through grace; all my hope is for mercy; and all I ask is acceptance through Jesus Christ. What should I do now if the work were to be begun.' Clasping Dr. Lovell's hand she said,

Digitized by Google

'I give you so much trouble, doctor! indeed I am not worth taking so much pains about.' 'That is as *we* think;' he replied 'we are willing to keep you amongst us as long as we can.' She never, when able to speak, forebore long from breaking forth into a repetition of some of the most beautiful and applicable parts of the Psalms, as the 27th, much of the 46th, and the 90th; and one day after she had been thus solacing her weary spirits, she remarked, ''Tis perhaps a low idea of heaven, but one not void of comfort to me who rest so very ill in general, to think that there will be *no* night there—also it is a land the inhabitants of which will no more say, I am sick.' She one day observed, 'that such lengthened sufferings shewed how greatly she needed purification,' and being told of the death of a neighbour, a very amiable and worthy man, after a short illness, she said, 'Ah, how many more stripes have I needed than he! a few days suffering carried him to his rest, while I have required many, many months!' She then added, 'but I have been favoured with so many more talents and opportunities than he enjoyed!' Speaking of her state of burning fever, she said, 'Nothing but the last icy hand will cool me—poor Patty! I shall very soon rejoin her!' and added, 'how short is the longest suffering; eternity is long enough to be happy in; a thousand years are to him but as one day! I trust I have not a wish or a hope, but that the Lord should do as seemeth it good unto him. I hope I shall feel the same penitence and submission as dear Patty did. I have great comfort and

Digitized by Google

quietness in my mind, and except in the anguish of extreme *suffering*, when the body will be disturbed, I hope it may be said, I bear my sickness patiently. What a treasure are the Psalms of David for Christians in every age!—That a shepherd boy with his harp could furnish material for the devotion of successive generations to the end of time! "Be strong, and he shall comfort your hearts; and put ye your trust in the Lord." "Oh, tarry thou the Lord's leisure—He himself is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup!" When we are upon the brink of eternity, how do all earthly things shrink into their merited littleness! this is the point from whence to view them, "O God, thou art my God, my soul thirsteth after thee."'

On Monday the 14th, a clerical friend called upon her. She was in a sweet calm, and with a somewhat milder pulse. She said, 'In none of my illnesses have I ever known much of those triumphs which I hear of; but I have never been destitute of consolation, and trust, and reliance; not that unauthorized calmness, I hope, which some deem to be always a symptom of peace to the soul.' Mr. —— spoke of the delightful idea conveyed in our privilege of addressing our Creator by the endearing name of Father; there is something so tender in the title! 'Yes;' she replied, 'nothing brings us so close to God, and this very endearing epithet is a pledge of, and even gives us a claim upon his loving mercy. God has been abundantly good to me,' she continued, 'His chastisements are gracious loving-kindnesses! He will not let me forget him! I

Digitized by Google

thank God I have been enabled in the night, when sleepless, to make use of many hours in devotion and meditation, which have been greatly profitable to me, otherwise my time has been so occupied in the day, that I should have appropriated too little to private devotion; but my long nightly prayers and reflections have proved a great support and compensation to me when my daily ones have been abridged. 'What great use have I found,' she said, 'in single texts; sometimes half a dozen have furnished the whole manual of a poor man!' Here she enumerated a series of passages most affecting and applicable to a time of need. 'It requires great faith,' she resumed, 'to receive pain and trials with thankfulness, and with a persuasion that they are sent in love; it is so natural to flesh and blood to love ease and enjoyment!' When nearly at the worst, she said to Miss F., 'I think I have left nothing very material undone—I hope I can say that I have never through all my long illness expressed a wish, or put up a single prayer for recovery—I find it the only thing to lie at the foot of the cross and say, "Thy will be done!"'

In an interval of severe suffering, she cried, 'Lord, say unto my soul, thy sins be forgiven thee!' and after a moment she resumed, "the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared," &c. O how this corruptible body presseth down the soul! Oh, Adam, what hast thou done? There had been no sickness, had there been no sin; but no sin, no Saviour; and no Saviour, a happiness far short, possibly, of what we hope for through

Digitized by Google

him.' 'Oh what will it be,' she added, when our eyes close on this scene and open upon the world of spirits! I have often thought, since I have been lying here, of poor Thistlewood's expression: 'We shall soon know the grand secret.' A Christian may say the same; it is a secret equally to *him*; but *he* says it with a firm faith and well-grounded assurance that there is a reward for the righteous; that there is a God who judgeth the earth.'

In the course of conversation, she spoke of the joys of heaven, and said, 'It is delightful to know that they will be unspeakable and full of glory: rest in the bosom of God and the Saviour, and a full enjoyment of his presence chiefly present themselves to my mind. The meeting with dear friends, will, I should think, constitute a part of our felicity, but a very subordinate one; like Whitfield, I think we shall be apt to say, 'Stand back, and keep me not from the sight of my Saviour.' Important as doctrines are,' she observed, 'yet except the leading ones, for which we ought to be ready to be led to the stake, they yield much with me to the purifying of the inward hidden man of the heart. Conformity to God, a walking in his steps, spiritual-mindedness, a subduing the old Adam within us—here is the grand difficulty and the acceptable offering to God! It is observable,' she remarked, 'that in the introductory verses to almost all St. Paul's epistles, he says, "Grace, mercy, and peace"—peace comes after grace and mercy.'

On another occasion, when suffering under the extremity of sickness, she looked up with quick-

Digitized by Google

ness to those who were supporting her, and said, 'I seem as if I were impatient, but it is, I hope, only infirmity of body.' She went on to say, 'I can offer nothing but sorrow and repentance; to grace alone I am a debtor; it is unqualified mercy and pardon that I crave.'

In speaking about her medicine, she said, 'I wish—no! I do not wish, nor trouble myself about the event; the taking it is my care—with the rest I have nothing to do.' When holding her bitter potions in her hand, she would frequently say, 'How much more bitter was the vinegar and the gall.' Amongst the texts which she was continually repeating to herself was the passage from the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, "It (i. e. correction) worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness," but,' she added, 'not as payment; all is free gift.'

To the Rev. Mr. ——, who called and prayed by her bedside she said, 'I thank God I have not an anxiety whether to live or die;' and added with energy, 'There is peace and safety at the foot of the cross; blessed be his holy name I am enabled to cast myself there, in a full, undivided, unqualified reliance on that blood that was shed upon it!'

'You have been a blessing to the world,' said Mr. ——; 'No,' she replied, 'mine has been a poor little way; I *have* done nothing, I *could* do nothing: the righteousness, mercies, and merits of Christ, are all in all.' In acute suffering, she exclaimed, 'How long, O Lord, how long! but I have not yet suffered enough for my purification.'

Her attendant observed, 'If *you* need all this,

Digitized by Google

Ma'am, *we* may be well filled with dismay.' To which she answered, 'The blood of Christ is sufficient; there is no acceptance for the best without it, and with it the worst need not fear obtaining pardon and salvation upon repentance; but it must be profound *heart-repentance.*' An earnest hope being expressed for her recovery, she said, 'Don't wish it—pray that His will may be done *in* me and *by* me; pray that I may bear testimony to His faithfulness unto the end. I would renounce everything except my hold upon the Rock of my salvation.'

On receiving the letter of a friend, wherein an acknowledgment was made of the blessing which 'Practical Piety' had proved to him, in first awakening pious feelings in his mind, she said with great emotion, 'I am sure I ought to be deeply humbled and grateful that God has deigned to work by so mean an instrument as I am; to him be all the glory. I hope I don't think anything in the world of my poor doings—I utterly discard them—to him be all praise and thanksgiving for ever.'

She often said, when she heard hopes expressed for her recovery, 'It will be all well, my case is in good hands; suffering is the penalty of sin; not only are our diseases painful, but the very remedies for them are also for the most part bitter and painful—to me a very striking proof and consequence of the fall. I have had a life of so much prosperity, that I needed powerful correction. Before I was in trouble I went wrong, and, oh! that I were able to add the latter part of the sentence, "but now have I kept thy law."' Then, in allusion to the

Digitized by Google

restless night she had passed, 'If we have wearisome nights, what a happiness it is to know that they are 'appointed' to us, and by whom.'

The friends of this admirable woman were now relieved from all immediate apprehension of her dissolution; although she still continued in so weak and suffering a state as to allow them little room to entertain any hope of her remaining among them another winter. While in this state, as those about her were discoursing on the womens' clubs and the Wrington Bible meetings, &c. in which she and all the departed sisters had taken so lively a part, she observed, 'My prayer must now be to submit to be useless. This is the very correction I stood in need of—to annihilate self is the greatest point, and to rejoice that the thing does as well, or better, though I am not permitted to be the doer of it.

'Those also serve who only stand and wait.'

But I find it less easy to *suffer* than to *do* for God's sake.' In speaking to a friend of some passages of her past life, she said 'it was her natural constitution to be apprehensive; yet she had been led to undertake many bold schemes, and to carry them through with perseverance, though under a want of hopefulness of their success; that she was persevering, but not sanguine.'

During this her tedious illness, which was expected to be her last, she one day remarked to her medical attendant, that though she had attained to so considerable an age, she had experienced the

Digitized by Google

pains of many dangerous complaints, and that probably an attack upon her chest would be final; but she did not mean to manage for the Almighty, and had not the slightest care or anxiety about the method of her dismissal.

In arranging some future plan with a friend, which it might have caused some inconvenience to defer, she said, 'Not that I have the remotest idea of living through the winter, but we must plan for time and prepare for eternity.' At another time she said, 'I often think we are not thankful enough for our negative mercies: I have frequently felt grateful that I have never been confined in a madhouse, a prison, or a court.' These parts of her conversation are here introduced to show by how much vivacity even in sickness, it was occasionally distinguished. She remarked, when restored to some degree of strength, that people were too apt at an advanced age to imagine that because they were able to do but little, they were therefore exempted from doing any thing; but that our work was never finished whilst we were on earth, and that when we had only one talent left, we must strive to the last to make the most of that one.

Speaking afterwards on the duty of aiming at the edification of her innumerable visitors, she said that upon her first introduction to worldly characters, if she had a prospect of seeing them more than once, she did not immediately press the subject of religion, but rather strove to do away prejudice, and to prepare the way by making a favourable impression; but if she knew it would be

Digitized by Google

a single opportunity, she endeavoured to lose no time, but to come to the point at once.

She went on to observe, that young persons, whose affections were too much wedded to the world, were frequently brought to her by their pious relations, in the hope of her being able to dissuade them from the love of public amusements; but (she added) I always answered to their anxious solicitations on this head, by saying, that in my little way of practice, it was not my method to attack symptoms, but to apply myself in the first instance to the internal disease.

She remarked that many things had been cultivated since her youth by her own sex, which she had determined to make no effort towards acquiring; as a superficial, or even a deeper knowledge of them would tend to no utility, either to herself or others; that she frequently heard ladies using philosophical and technical terms, but it did not inspire her with any desire to dabble in the sciences, which would have consumed much time without any of that good which was the sure result of a thorough acquaintance with a few things.

At another time, adverting to the multitude of improving and entertaining books which were daily issuing from the press, for the use of children and young persons, she added, 'In my early youth there was scarcely anything between 'Cinderella' and 'the Spectator.'

Mrs. H. More not only passed tolerably well through the winter, but continued to advance gradually in strength, and the number of her visitors

Digitized by Google

increased in proportion. All were delighted to remark that the sprightliness of her conversation was unabated. One of her friends informed her of the rejection of the Catholic Bill in the House of Peers, by a majority of thirty-nine. 'Then,' said she, 'we have beaten the Romanists with forty stripes save one.' Her interest in her country's weal and moral advancement had not been diminished by the illness which had for so many months held her in perfect seclusion.

The following letters we find written about this time; the introduction of which may help to supply some short notices of this interval,—an interval which, until her convalescence was much advanced, was passed in her chamber in great tranquillity, and in the free communication of her unstudied thoughts to those who lived most in her confidence.

From his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester to Mrs. H. More.

Bagshot Park, 1820.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Having this day finished the very valuable work you had the goodness to send me, which I have read with the sincerest gratification, I lose no time in offering you my warmest thanks for it, and expressing how much I admire this most excellent book. If any thing could increase the respect and veneration I have very long entertained for the author, it would be the perusal of works which must do good to every one who reads them.

Digitized by Google

Before I had the pleasure of being personally known to you, my mother had taught me to form an esteem which subsequent acquaintance could only increase. It is now many years since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and during that length of time I have constantly had that of hearing of you, and knowing the good you never cease doing. But I lament to learn that your health has not been what I could have wished. I have heard with the deepest regret, the great trials you have experienced; trials, for which no one is so well prepared as yourself, and under which you are supported by that which can alone afford consolation in affliction.

I intreated my excellent friend, Lady Olivia Sparrow, to make my excuses to you for not immediately returning my thanks for your kind recollection of me, but I was unwilling to write until I had read these pages, being well assured that my debt of gratitude would be greatly augmented by their perusal; which satisfaction till now, I have not been able to afford myself, in consequence of my having been engaged in a long tour, which took up a very considerable time.

Allow me to express my anxious hope, that it will please God to preserve during many years, a life that is invaluable to the world, and to request of you to believe me ever, with perfect truth,

My dear Madam,

Your very sincere friend,

and very faithful servant,

WILLIAM FREDERICK.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

Aug. 10, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your very nice kind long letter both exhilarated and afflicted me, like one of Shakspeare's tragic comedies. I should not have punished you with writing so soon, but that it comes across me that if anything relating to those destructive engines, Sunday newspapers, stage coaches, and other Sabbath-breaking grievances, should come before your house, you might, perhaps, make some use of a passage I have just met with in one of poor Lord Orford's letters, it is dated 1761. 'Bussy, the ambassador, put off his journey to Monday. He says this is a strange country, where *he can get no waggoner to carry his goods on a Sunday.* I am glad a Spanish war waits for a conveyance, and that a waggoner's veto is as good as a tribune's of Rome, and can stop Mr. Pitt in his career to Mexico.'

I was awfully struck at the horrible increase of Sabbath-breaking since this was written, and it strikes me the more as coming from a man (with sorrow I say it) of no religion.

Sept. 12. So far I had written more than a month ago; but it pleased God to prevent my going on with my letter by a seizure, the most violent I have ever had. For a considerable time there seemed scarcely a probability of my living a day. Twice I appeared to be quite dead, and

Digitized by Google

nothing but the vigorous measures of Dr. Lovell, in copiously bleeding, for the third time lately, could, humanly speaking, have called me back to this sinful and afflicted world. I fear I was not grateful enough when I felt myself alive, for I had been not only resigned, but desirous to depart; my weak faith suggesting to me, that on the next call, I might not be so willing. Pray for me, my dearest friend, that I may turn this short reprieve to a better account than I have done my numberless mercies.

I will not, because I cannot, say what I have felt for you in your late trying and perilous situation. I will not weary *you* with this subject, though even in this remote and quiet nook it harasses my mind day and night; but I will turn to a less disgusting, though I confess, to me not a pleasing subject, I mean, a life, which I have been reading, of an eminent servant of Christ. Narrative is always interesting, especially if it records the actions of eminent men, but I own, this work has given me more pain than pleasure. Why call up from oblivion, extravagancies and absurdities which good men would wish to lose sight of in *consideration* of the immense benefit these extraordinary men have done to religion? Their follies would still have been confined to their own journals and to their magazines, where they would have remained a proper caution to their own people. Why transplant such weeds into a book which will be read by worldly people? It must make the godly grieve and the ungodly triumph. Those

Digitized by Google

who know to what a low ebb Christianity had then sunk in the church, will be more ready to thank God for raising up these awakeners, than to expose their errors. When I think of their burning zeal, their incredible labours, their pure disinterestedness, I think also with pleasure of their present rest from their labours, and how they are rejoicing in heaven over the thousands they have been instrumental in bringing thither.

By this tedious scrawl, written *à plusieures reprises*, I seem as if I thought you were as much at leisure as myself, solitary and useless being as I am, while you, I fear, are nearly worn out with labour and anxiety.

May the God of all grace and mercy be with you. Amen.

Your affectionate,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

My dear Friends,

I should have written sooner had I had anything to say; but the Annals of an Hospital are not particularly amusing. Pray give my kind love to Mrs. Ford, with many thanks for her very obliging and friendly invitation. I am persuaded I could nowhere, either for body or mind, find more gratifications than with her and her excellent daughters; but I can only repeat what you know has been my general answer to many other dear friends, that for age, sickness, and sorrow, there is no such refuge

Digitized by Google

as home, no other place in which one has a right to be disagreeable. I shall be very glad to see you at the time you mention, and will send the carriage for you with much pleasure.

I have been down stairs but once since I saw you. The day you and Mr. Harford left me I caught a violent cold, or rather the cold caught me, for I did nothing to invite it; it was merely the severity of the weather. I have had a great oppression on my chest, and my lungs so susceptible, that a clean table-cloth if not first put to the fire, sets me coughing. A profusion of James's powder for many days, blistering, &c. did nothing for me. I have frequently coughed whole nights without any intermission—gentle opiates, together with this beginning thaw, will I trust, under God, considerably relieve me, and I already feel better for the latter. I am ashamed to have said so much of my petty grievances,—I, who have all the comforts, and conveniences, and attentions and mitigations in the world, while so many houseless wretches are perishing for want of those good things in which I abound. The James's are extremely kind—the two sons came in succession, and performed our Christmas-day and Sunday duties, and the father the following evening, and read me two of Chalmers's Sermons—they have been several evenings since, and would come oftener if I would let them.

After much contest with her German booksellers, I have at length got Madame Necker de Saussure's 'Notice sur le Caractère et les Ecrits de Madame

Digitized by Google

de Stäel.' Her reprehension of me is very gentle and polite, but she seems deeply hurt that I do not think her cousin truly religious. I have not yet read the book half through, but I have read enough to see that her book is not merely the éloge, but the apotheosis of the deceased. Like the woman she celebrates, she writes elegantly, and even splendidly, but she has employed her eloquence to varnish over every thing that was not fit to be seen both in her conduct and her writings. The principles of Delphine are not only excused but extolled. I never read that work, having been told by men, not particularly scrupulous, that it was equally offensive to virtue and religion. Religion, however, is the great point in Madame de Stäel's character on which she insists. It is lamentable that this amiable and very ingenious lady, of whose piety the Huber's were beginning to hope favourably, should, through the partiality of friendship and family connections, have been drawn in to sanction so much error. These distinguished ladies have a religion of their own—but it is not the Christian religion—humility is excluded; there is no intimation of a fallen nature, of its restoration, of the renewal of the soul, of divine influences, &c. Yet the word *inspiration* is to be found in every page, but it is the inspiration of genius! the swelling of conscious talent! alas! I would weep for them. Adieu! God bless you both.

Your's affectionately,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It is only a few days ago that I could prevail on Messrs. T. &c. to let me have *the book*. Imprisoned in my chamber for three weeks, it is only yesterday that I could finish it. I have read it with mingled feelings; pain and pleasure had by turns the upper hand. But first, let me, through you, thank the admirable author, not only for her kind present, but for the elegant and delicate hand with which she has reproved me. As to the work, it indicates a kindred genius with the subject it celebrates, a similarity of striking thoughts, brilliancy of style, and happy turn of expression, the same ardour in feeling, the same generosity of sentiment. I wish my sacred regard to truth would allow me to stop here, but you *insist* on knowing my sentiments. I really feel myself so *entirely* inferior to both ladies, that I am not worthy to offer them; and I feel also, that I am going to expose myself to the charge of want of taste, of want of candour, or of envy of such eclipsing merits. It appears to me then that from the excess of her affection, and the warmth of her generosity, Madame Necker, not content with making the Eloge of Madame de Stäel, has made her *apotheosis*. It would be a satire on my own judgment and feelings not to allow that I am one among the innumerable admirers of Madame de Stäel. Corinne as an exhibition of genius is a *chef*

Digitized by Google

d'œuvre; of Delphine I have no right to speak, as I have never read it, but having been assured that it was offensive to morality, I was sorry to observe that Madame Necker's warm heart had led her pure mind to defend it. I am at present too unwell to look over the passages in the admirable work 'de l'Allemagne,' on which I took the liberty to hazard a remark or two in my Essay on St. Paul. A passage in Madame Necker's book serves to recall the substance of it to my mind—the passage is '*Le Juge suprême sera clément envers le génie.*' I humbly conceive this is a dangerous sentiment; Voltaire, Rousseau, Bolingbroke, Lord Byron, and a hundred others, would be happy to take shelter, for the use to which they applied their talents, under the wing of such a woman as Madame Necker. Perhaps had I as much personal interest in defending genius as she has, I might have been tempted to treat it with greater lenity. Again, I am a passionate admirer of whatever is beautiful in nature, or exquisite in art. These are the gifts of God, but no part of his essence; they proceed from God's goodness, and should kindle our gratitude to him, but I cannot conceive that the most enchanting beauties of nature, or the most splendid productions of the fine arts, have any necessary connection with religion. You will observe that I mean the religion of Christ, not that of Plato; the religion of reality, and not of the beau ideal. Adam sinned in a garden too beautiful for us to have any conception of it. The Israelites selected fair groves and pleasant mountains for the peculiar scenes of their

Digitized by Google

idolatry. The most exquisite pictures and statues have been produced in those parts of Europe where pure religion has made the least progress. These decorate religion, but they neither produce or advance it. They are the enjoyments and refreshments of life, and very compatible with true religion, but they make no part of religion. Athens was at once the most learned and the most polished city in the world; so devoted to the fine arts, that it is said to have contained more statues than men, yet in this eloquent city, the eloquent apostle's preaching made but one proselyte in the whole Areopagus.

I am happy to learn from her elegant biographer, that the close of the life of her illustrious cousin was so eminently pious. The best Christians must look with envy at the passage in which she describes herself as not spending a quarter of an hour without thinking of God.

Though I have already said too much, I cannot help adding a word on what appears to me to be the distinctive character of Christianity. I mean a deep and abiding sense in the heart, of our fallen nature; of our actual and personal sinfulness; of our lost state, but for the redemption wrought for us by Jesus Christ; of our universal necessity of a change of heart; and the conviction that this change can only be effected by the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is not a splendid, but it is a saving religion; it is humbling now that it may be elevating hereafter. It appears to me also that the requisition which the Christian religion makes on the most highly gifted as well as the most meanly

Digitized by Google

endowed, is, that after the loftiest and most successful exercise of the most brilliant talents, the favoured possessor should lay his talents and himself at the foot of the cross, with the same deep abasement and self-renunciation as his more illiterate neighbour, and this from a conviction of who it is that hath made them to differ. I give Madame Necker high credit for the exact pencil with which she has drawn Madame Necker la mère. It is precisely the picture I drew in my own mind more than forty years ago. I saw much of both those distinguished parents, as they were in familiar intimacy with Mr. Garrick, at whose house I was then staying. With great abilities, I thought her too studiously ingenious to be agreeable, and too *recherchée* ever to seem easy; in short she seemed to have been formed to be the admiration of Mr. Gibbon.

I am sorry you insisted so much on my real opinion of the excellently-written volume in question. I feel that I have exposed myself to the charge of injustice to distinguished merit, and of ingratitude for the entertainment I have received from the living lady, as well as from *her* to whom human opinion of a much higher order than mine is now of no value. I have no room for other subjects. May the Almighty grant us all the benefits and consolations of the late gracious season!

H. More.

I must add, that in sallies of imagination, and happiness of illustration, Mad. Necker is frequently not inferior to her admirable relation.

Digitized by Google

Madame Necker à Madame Huber.

Le 24 Février, 1820.

Ce n'est pas sans raison chère amie que j'ai beaucoup hesité avant d'oser offrir La Notice à Madame More. Non seulement la partie frivole de cet ouvrage ne me paroissoit pas digne d'elle, mais je sentois, et je crois vous l'avoir écrit, qu'une personne aussi clairvoyante, aussi versée dans les plus grands sujets, éleveroit bien des objections contre celle qui semble plus sérieuse. Cependant chère amie, je ne me repens pas d'avoir suivi votre conseil; tout ce qui vient de cette part est instructif, est fait pour améliorer, et j'aime mieux connoitre directement les fautes que je puis avoir commises pour remonter avec plus de certitude á leur source au dedans de moi.

Je laisse de coté le point de vue litteraire, quoique assurément le jugement de Madame More doive avoir plus de poids qu'aucun autre dans ce genre, mais elle même a l'air de compter pour si peu un mérite extrêmement distingué à cet egard, qu'elle apprend à n'y pas attacher trop de prix. J'en viens à ce qui seul est essentiel. Le mot *religion*—soit avec elle soit avec Mr. Huber et vous, *est*, et *devoit être*, la grande pierre d'achoppement. Il est certainement très heureux que des personnes telles que Madame More s'attachent à ramener ce mot à son sens le plus précis, le plus juste, et en même tems le plus salutaire dans son application. Cependant elle connoit trop bien le cœur humain,

Digitized by Google

(et ses ouvrages en sont la preuve) pour ne pas savoir que des sentimens très vifs, très sincères, des sentimens qui ont aussi jusqu'à un certain point une influence heureuse sur le cœur et sur la vie, ne correspondent pas exactement avec la définition qu'elle en donne. Bien des gens qui se croyent de bonne foi chretiens ont *leur religion*. Cette religion, ou melée d'idées d'imagination ou bornée par des raisonnemens humains, n'est surement pas la meilleure ; elle n'est pas dans un sens exact *le christianisme*, et par consequent la vraie religion ; et pourtant qui oserait vouloir deraciner ces sentimens, avant d'être assuré de les remplacer par de plus purs ?

En faisant l'histoire du cœur de Madame de Stäel, pouvoit on omettre un trait aussi saillant que ces elans si fréquens de son ame, que ce desir non accompli mais toujours renouvellé, de se rapprocher de Dieu ; que cette marche vers l'amelioration imprimée par ce même desir à son existence. En peignant ce sentiment, ainsi que j'ai peint tous les autres, en disant par exemple qu'elle attachoit l'idée de retribution à la vie présente plus qu'à la vie à venir, j'ai bien montré qu'il avoit ses bizarreries, ses imperfections, qu'il n'etoit pas en un mot la religion telle qu'a raison de l'entendre Madame More. Si je me suis servie de ce terme par extension, j'ai cru qu'on ne pourroit se tromper sur l'idée ; la nature de l'ouvrage, celle de ses lectures en France m'interdisoit des explications plus précises, et ce qui me les interdisoit surtout c'est que je ne pouvois les donner

Digitized by Google

sans paroître m'arroger une supériorité qui auroit blessé, non seulement les enfans de Madame de Stäel mais mon amitié à moi même. Il me semble que j'ai pris les mêmes précautions dans le reste de l'ouvrage, et je suis sûre du moins d'avoir voulu les prendre. Ainsi j'ai dit, en propres termes qu'*elle* ne devoit pas servir d'exemple. Dans le chap. *Effets du Tems*, en montrant ce qu'elle avoit gagné j'ai fait connoître ce qui lui avoit longtemps manqué, et en disant que sa marche avoit été arretée au moment où il paroissoit (ce dont je ne doute pas) se préparer en elle un dernier et heureux développement, j'ai bien fait voir que je ne l'ai jamais crue arrivée à la perfection. Il ne me semble donc pas que cet ouvrage soit un apothéose, et sous ce seul rapport j'oserai me plaindre de l'expression employée par Madame More.

Quant à la phrase *Dieu sera clément envers le génie*, puisqu'elle lui a presenté le sens qu'elle indique, je la changerai, si jamais on me demande une 2de édition. Ayant dans la pensée le vœu que Dieu fit grace à Madame de Stäel je n'ai osé parler que de clémence; j'ai eu tort de géneraliser une idée individuelle, mais en esperant la clémence, l'idée que le Génie put se dispenser de remplir les conditions attachées à l'exercise de cette clémence ne s'est pas seulement offerte à moi.

Peut-être Madame More a-t-elle pensé que j'exagerois les heureux effets des ouvrages de Madame de Stäel, et je puis en effet ne pas en être juge. Neanmois dans la sphere animée par Madame More on a le bonheur de perdre de vue la multi-

Digitized by Google

tude de ces êtres prevenus qui n'en sont pas seulement au point de consentir à lire un ouvrage de pieté. C'est auprés de ceux-là qu'une Muse est le seul missionaire possible. Elle a disposé les cœurs de ces infortunés a recevoir des impressions salutaires ; elle a diminué les prejugés anti-chrétiens : c'est là ce que j'ai voulu dire ; et si j'ai osé emprunter les admirables paroles de l'apôtre, ce n'est pas assurement que j'ai songé à une comparaison qui seroit une profanation même s'il s'agissoit de la plus parfaite des créatures, c'est qu'en effet Madame de Stäel a dit sans cesse que la source du beau, du grand, de tout ce que les hommes admirent avec enthousiasme dans les arts et dans la nature, n'etoit autre que la divinité. J'ai pris la plus belle des expréssions pour rendre une verité qu'elle a proclamée, et quoique la source de cette expression fut si haute et si sainte je n'ai pas cru quelle put interdit de se'n servir.

J'ai répondu jusqu'ici indistinctement à Madame More et à Monsieur Huber ; mais la question des beaux arts regarde uniquement la première. Je ne pourrai pas la combattre, car de la manière dont elle l'entend je suis entièrement de son avis. Ce n'est pas avec la religion pratique que les arts ont une connexion nécessaire, et, dans des livres faits exclusivement pour l'inculquer, ces sujets seroient une trop forte distraction ; mais ce n'est pas à cette classe qu'appartiennent les ouvrages de Madame de Stäel. Et comme les beaux arts sont le resultat du développement de nos facultés, comme celui qui nous a donné ces facultés, et les occasions de les

Digitized by Google

exercer, n'a eu que des vues bienfaisantes, il semble qu'il vaut mieux chercher, (qu'il est permis à l'homme de le faire,) à entrer dans le sens de ces vues, que d'envisager les beaux arts sous leur coté sensuel et profane. Ils paroissent participer à la céleste origine comme à la corruption de notre nature, et on peut influer sur leur direction.

Pardon, chère amie, de cette longue lettre, qui se ressent du trouble de mon départ. Mais mon profond respect pour Madame More est cause que rien de ce qui tient à son opinion ne peut être traité legèrement par moi. Si elle a pu croire que ses remarques m'inspiraisent autre chose que de la reconnoissance, elle ne m'a pas connue.

Voilà cette lettre, chère amie, dont j'aurai besoin de vous reparler. Je ne m'étois surement pas flattée qu'en écrivant un ouvrage, dont le bût étoit de présenter, sous ses cotés favorables, une personne telle que Madame de Stäel, je puise obtenir en entier la précieuse approbation de Madame More. Je ne lui aurois même pas envoyé ce livre, sans les lignes auxquelles elle repond. En trouvant donc fort naturelles, et souvent très justes, les remarques qu'elle fait, j'oserai pourtant réclamer contre le mot d'*apothéose*. Les personnes, les lettres, les journaux mêmes, qui m'ont reproché d'avoir été importé trop loin par l'amitié, se sont accordés à dire que ce n'étoit pas même *un panegyrique*, et qu'il y avoit un mélange de jugement dans mon admiration qui laissoit entrevoir les imperfections d'un tel caractère. Si je voulois citer, il y auroit de quoi nous ennuyer toutes les deux des preuves de ce que

Digitized by Google

j'avance. En tout, je ne sais si je suis satisfaite, les éloges litteraires étant peu de chose pour moi, mais quant à être soumise et reconnoisante même, je le suis très certainement. J'espère ne pas pécher par orgueil—c'est assez de le faire involontairement de tant d'autres manières, et je recevrai toujours comme un bienfait les avis, les reproches mêmes, d'une femme telle que votre amie.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

Barley Wood, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

At length it has pleased God to enable me to write, to thank you both for your kind letter, which I was happy to receive. I have been confined to the house ever since last September, and to my chamber since Christmas, and a good part of that time to my bed. I am, thanks to Almighty goodness, growing gradually much better. I have this week seen a friend or two for an hour, and breakfasted twice in the next room.

Madame Necker has treated me and my bold remonstrance with a delicacy which shows the refinement of her own elevated mind. Truly glad should I be if such a mind could be brought to receive "the truth as it is in Jesus;" for those fine speculations which she and her accomplished relative have fed on as Christianity, afford no solid relief to a *fallen creature*; and such the best of human beings are by nature. The wisest and the best stand in as much need to be redeemed by

Digitized by Google

the blood of Christ, and to be sanctified and guided by the Holy Spirit, as the most illiterate and the most unworthy. The two great principles on which our salvation *must* be founded, are faith and holiness; faith, without which it is impossible to please God,—holiness, without which, no man can see the Lord. Those are not *my* words, as you know, but the words of the great apostle. 'Madame Necker says, 'a muse may be a missionary,'—I agree with her; but then it must be such a muse as that of Cowper or Milton, in whom the sanctity directs and elevates the poetry; where genius is made subservient to Christian principle, and embellishes it without altering its character or debasing its purity. These two are *Bible poets*, who received the gospel in simplicity, and adorned it without any departure from its truth.

This amiable lady a little mistakes my character and turn of mind. She supposes me to be so strict that I disapprove the *lighter* parts of her book; so far is this from being the case, that I delight in narrative, in anecdotes, and in traits of character. It is only on the more *serious* passages that I took the liberty to animadvert. I should not have offered a remark on the *omission* of religion;—it is only on what appeared to me to be *mistakes* in religion that I presumed to speak. Her powerful intellect, her high cultivation, her candid mind, of which she has given so amiable an instance in her bearing with my impertinent observations, impel me to observe what a fine soil that mind would be, in which to plant genuine unadulterated Christianity. Though a

Digitized by Google

self-denying, humbling religion, it gives more than it takes away; it gives a peace which the world, with all its promises and blandishments, cannot give. It gives humility, which, far from prohibiting the exercise of talents, only encourages their consecration to him who gave them, with that prostration of heart, and self-renouncing spirit, which will lead the possessor to exclaim "Who hath made me to differ?" What have I that I have not received?

In the midst of my illness, Cadell wrote to intreat me to preface a new edition of 'Moral Sketches,' with a short tribute of our late lamented king. My friend wrote him word it was utterly impossible, that I might as well attempt to fly, as to write. A week after, supposing me to be better, he again renewed his intreaty. I was not better, but worse. I fancied, however, that what was difficult, might not be impossible. So, having got everybody out of the way, I furnished myself with pen, ink, and paper, which I concealed in my bed, and next morning in a high fever, with my pulse above a hundred, without having formed one idea, bolstered up, I began to scribble. I got on for about seven pages, my hand being almost as incompetent as my head. I hid my scrawl, and said not a word, while my doctor and my friends wondered at my increased debility. After a strong opiate, I next morning returned to my task, and finished seven pages more, and delivered my almost illegible papers to my friend to transcribe and send away. I got well scolded, but I loved the king, and was carried through by a sort of affectionate impulse; so it stands

Digitized by Google

as a preface to the seventh edition. You will be as much surprised as myself that this slight work should have made its way so rapidly in these distracted times, which, the booksellers tell me, have been the most unfavourable to literature that they have ever known. The preface is just such a meagre performance as you would expect from the writer, and from the strange circumstances of the writing.

Thursday, July 13.—I began this letter some days ago, and wrote a little as I felt able, but have since had a considerable return of fever and pain. At my time of life I am not so sanguine as to expect anything like perfect restoration; nor am I anxious about it; all I desire is a prepared mind, an obedient heart, and a resigned spirit. I am surrounded with many mercies, and have the consolation of knowing that I have the prayers of many Christian friends.

Dear Wilberforce has been more active and more brilliant than ever, if that were possible, this year. May God preserve his precious life, which he seems to be wearing out by incessant hard labour.

My heavy, and truly irreparable domestic loss has been as you will believe, bitterly felt by me during this confinement of nine months; but the time is short, and we are all hastening, if we spend that short time well, to a country where there is neither sin nor suffering.

As I address both, I conclude with saying, may God bless you both.

Your's, my dear friends, most faithfully,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Sophia Fowler (a deaf and dumb girl, in the American Asylum[1]) to Mrs. H. More.

Hartford, August 9, 1820.

RESPECTED MADAM,

Mr. Gallaudet wishes me to write to you. It gives me great pleasure to write to you, although I think we shall never see each other's faces, but I do hope I shall meet you in heaven, where, how happy we shall be to see each other's faces! I hope we shall make preparation for death, and God will give us peace and happiness when we die. I was sorry to hear that you were sick, but I hope you are now better. I think how I live here, a great many miles from you. I understand you love God, and the Lord Jesus Christ very much, because you have done much good to others, and you also have composed many good and religious books, which I hope I shall be very much pleased to read in future, and I will remember you. If you are in any pain, I hope God will descend upon your soul in peace. Jesus Christ sees us always when we are in pain, and he sympathizes with us; and he will certainly bless us, if we truly love and trust in him with ardent faith. Before I came to the asylum, I had not any ideas of religion, and immortality of the soul. How kind the providence was, to send Mr. Gallaudet to go to Paris, and he learned the signs from Mr. Sicard. Mr. S. kindly permitted Mr. Clerc to go to this country with Mr. Gallaudet. When they arrived

[1] Mrs. More had several little correspondents in this Asylum.

Digitized by Google

in it, I was exceedingly glad to hear it, because I earnestly wished to learn to read and I very much love to learn something of the Bible. I should sincerely be grateful to God for his many blessings to me, to let me learn so many different names. Many missionaries have gone to evangelize the poor heathen about the gospel and religion, which will teach them to be converted towards the Lord. I hope the blessed millennium will be happy, peaceable, and we friends, like the angels in paradise. I think the new asylum, which will be finished in September, will be very commodious, for the deaf and dumb to live in it. Our house will beautifully stand on Lord's hill. We can look over the beautiful landscape from this city. It is a very pleasant place in summer, but it is not the same in winter, although we shall be very comfortable and sitting round by the fire.

May your heavenly father bless you, and be always with you during your life. Although I write a letter to you, I hardly expect you will answer me, because I know that you are much engaged. I hope to pray to God for you.

I am, your's,

With much respect and esteem,

SOPHIA FOWLER.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

Lord R——'s friendship and mine is always rekindled upon every public trouble, but falls back into a quiet state as soon as the trouble subsides. I send you some of his numberless communications. Could you lay the subscription paper before any rich folks, you would do good. I mean, where the rich are also the liberal.

I saw yesterday, in the wreck of ——, an illustration of that obvious truth, that what begins in vanity, must end in vexation of spirit; indeed, it does not wait for the end, but jogs along with it through its whole course, robbing its progress of enjoyment, and its end of consolation. Poor man! he seems to have stripped his exterior of all its vain and costly trappings, and *talks* as if his mind were stripped of them too. He has a painful retrospect: may his prospective view be brighter.

We have been running through the life of E——. It was lent me by Serle. I am glad I did not pay thirty shillings for such lenten entertainment. The first volume is contemptibly trifling, the second insufferably dull.

Our king has a painful fit of the gout. He bore the cutting out the tumour from his head with great fortitude. The operation lasted ten minutes. Dr. M—— writes me, that after the king heard the first sermon Dr. P—— preached, he said to the

Digitized by Google

gentlemen about him, as he came out of the pew, 'I do not ask your opinion of this excellent discourse, because you could not fail to admire it.'

I am truly rejoiced at Dr. C.'s report of your amiable nephew. God grant that he may live to be a blessing to his father, and an honour to religion.

Though it has pleased infinite mercy to keep me from great trials and serious afflictions, yet the aggregate of petty cases, and the multiplication of little wearing intrusions and paltry vexations serve, and I hope *will* serve still more, to wean me from the desire of life. When one is assured that it is far better to depart, and to be with Christ, it is astonishing that we do not more practically adopt that great article of faith.

I hope you will find our dear friends, the Fords, improved in health. It would be a pretty *galanterie*, if they would bring you down some day next week, and spend a long day. If such a freak should occur, give me notice, and I will try to keep a clear coast.

I do not think the *Rhymes* make their way much. I fancy the world is pretty much of my opinion about them. Most of my friends indeed write favourably, but partiality warps the judgment. Dear Miss Frowd and I smile, when we see the scholars and the good authors more civil than their inferiors. All that I am sorry for is, that we had so large an edition, or I should have had the improvements inserted ere now.

I was seized the other day with a violent shivering fit, succeeded by a smart attack of fever, but would send for no doctor, knowing that experience

Digitized by Google

is often no bad substitute for wisdom. I gradually grow better, by persevering in my old strong remedies. This poor crazy tenement of mine encounters many shocks; that I resist them is marvellous, but I wait the great builder's will for being turned out on its falling to the ground.

Ever to you both an affectionate friend,

H. MORE.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

Barley Wood, Dec. 23, 1820.

I have been long in your debt for a most interesting and delightful letter, and in your debt I must be content to remain; for though I thankfully *acknowledge*, I am sure I shall not *answer* it. I hope in my late scrawl, I cleared my character of the foul blot of ingratitude. I have been most agreeably employed, in turning part of your large bounty to the best account I can devise; this hallowed and gracious season being a special call to attend to the wants of our fellow-creatures, as one of the best proofs of our love to HIM, who not only became man for our sakes, but man in his most destitute condition. Some author says, that charity is the truest epicurism, for it makes the giver eat with many mouths at once. You therefore at this moment may indulge your spiritual appetite with this wholesome food, which never makes one sick.

The touching portrait you draw of your own

Digitized by Google

domestic felicities, and your gratitude to the divine author of them, is as refreshing to me after reading the newspapers, (which have lately too much occupied my time,) as the reviving shower in a parched land. These turbulent times make one sad. I am sick of that liberty which I used so to prize. If any of your acquaintance want any, let them send to me, for I have more than I can make use of, and many have more than does them good.

I comfort myself, however, that if wickedness is more mischievous, goodness is more active. I see much, in the higher ranks at least, that gives me hope, and particularly in Ireland, where there is a striking improvement among several whom I am so happy as to call my friends. I had an interesting discourse the other day on this point, with my long-valued friend the Archbishop of Cashel, who considered this as a prognostic of better days. Have you observed that this year is the centenary of the South Sea scheme? We recovered the bursting of that bubble, as I hope we may do of this.

Do you know any thing of Mrs. Garrick? It is now long since I heard from her, which troubles me. Years do not seem to impair as much as they used to do. The Bishop of Durham, one of my early friends, is his own secretary and chaplain at eighty-six, and I have just received a ring, in memory of Mr. Hatsell, who had promised me a visit next summer. He was about the same age. You have heard of the 'Royal Society of Literature.' Another of my old and dear friends, the

Digitized by Google

Bishop of St. David's (himself, I believe, one of the first scholars on the bench) has been corresponding with me on the subject. The king is patron, and his patronage will be large. It is not yet quite organized, nor much known. The first dissertation is to be on 'The Age, Writings, and Genius of Homer;' a principal object being to promote ancient learning. Now as learning is the next best thing to religion, I hope the scheme may succeed. I have but one objection to it. Among the honorary members, they propose to include a few females. They have done unworthy me the honour to name me; I have written a strong remonstrance, declining the distinction, partly on the ground that I have no claim to it, but chiefly that I consider the circumstance of sex alone a disqualification.

I have just had a present sent me from Paris, a neat volume of my 'Cheap Repository Tracts,' well translated under the auspices of the Countess of Pastoret and the Duchess of Broglie. The translator tells me that the third edition was gone to the press, before they sent me the book.

I agree with you that Madame Necker's 'Life of Madame de Stäel' has great merit. There is much ability, and fine flashes of eloquence; but I found also much to censure, in point of principle, and I fairly told her so. She was so kind as to send me the book through my friend Mr. Huber, the elegant translator of 'Cœlebs.' Had she confined her eulogiums to the talents, the eloquence, the knowledge of her illustrious cousin, I should have gone all lengths

Digitized by Google

with her; but, as I ventured to tell her, she has made not her éloge but her apothéosis. She is painted as a model, not only of moral, but even of religious perfection, and she has deified talent, by saying 'Dieu sera clément au génie.'

I have told Madame Necker, that Hume and Bolingbroke and Byron, will gladly range themselves under her great authority. In answer to her saying (I mean Madame de Stäel) that religion was necessarily connected with the fine arts, poetry, and eloquence, I took the liberty to observe, that in the most learned and polished city of antiquity, in which it was said there were more statues than men, St. Paul produced no effect on the eloquent Areopagus; only one member being awakened: and we know, that in modern times, those countries, Italy for instance, where the fine arts have been carried to a perfection *we* have never reached, there is a deplorable ignorance of genuine Christianity. Genius and talent of every kind are the gift of God, and serve to adorn religion, and to display her in her highest beauty; but they are no part of religion itself; on the contrary, religion has found some of her worst enemies in those who have been the most supremely gifted.

The above are only a few of the observations I made when I returned thanks to Madame Necker for her book. To the credit of her humility be it spoken, she received them most patiently and even kindly; put my letter in her work-bag when she set out for Italy, seemed much affected, and said

Digitized by Google

she would make several alterations if her volume reached a second edition.

Your kindness will pardon all this egotism, which I am going to prolong, by telling you that I have just received from New York a present of an American edition of all my unworthy writings, more elegantly bound than I have seen any book coming from thence. I have much intercourse with that Continent; I have had visits from several who have been making the tour of Europe for improvement; and I have had letters from many, which discover cultivated minds. I am glad to have my prejudices against that vast republic softened. They are imitating all our religious and charitable institutions. They are fast acquiring *taste;* which, I think, is the last quality that republicans do acquire.

Your religious observations interested me greatly. I totally agree with you, that 'there is no better preparation for death, than the daily endeavour to conform our lives to the precepts of the gospel; that if our repentance for our past offences is sincere, and our desire to obey the revealed will of God is steady, and exemplified in our daily habits, there is no better preparation for death.' I give you back your own sentiments, as they are exactly my own, as are also your addition 'of the daily supplication through a Redeemer, and a lively faith.' As to 'unsinning obedience,' I believe the prophets and apostles themselves, never attained to it. I do not know of any *selection* of scripture that I could recommend. My own practice has been to make a cross in the margin against every text peculiarly

Digitized by Google

striking, or incapable of self-application. The portions at which I involuntarily open the Bible, are the Psalms and the prophet Isaiah, who may justly be called the evangelical prophet. There are also very sublime passages in Jeremiah, and indeed in the minor prophets, spiritual and personal as well as prophetic. Perhaps I read the epistles rather than the gospels, for this reason, that the latter being historical, have taken more hold of one's memory, and the former being less obvious, require closer attention. I can truly say that I have seldom taken up any part of the Old or New Testament in which I did not perceive something I had not observed before, or seen an old truth presented in a new light. I do not, however, read either sacred or profane writers as much as I wish. Added to the hindrances of very indifferent health, advanced age, the cares of my family, my schools, and many concerns in the parishes, to the comforts of which your liberality has so largely contributed, I see a great deal of company. My nearness to Clifton brings many strangers, besides my immediate friends, so that I had more time to myself formerly in London.

Have you read Magee's Sermons on the Atonement? He treats that important topic in a very able manner, and on quite new grounds. He is one of my most attached friends. He is just made Bishop of Raphoe, to my great satisfaction; as he has, I think, fourteen children, and is a most able and pious man.

I beg to be both respectfully and affectionately

Digitized by Google

remembered to Lady Pepys. Your young people do not know me, but they have the cordial prayers of their father's friend,

H. More.

Extract of a letter from Mrs. H. More to Mr. Macauley.

My dear Friend,

I wrote the letter to Mr. Huber with great reluctance, but he was so *very* earnest that I should say something for them to read to Madame Necker, that I was compelled to do something. You said that some of our pious friends greatly admired Madame de Stäel's views of religion. To me they are unsound, unsatisfactory, and unscriptural. They illustrate Isaiah's remark, "'Tis as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth and he drinketh, but he awaketh and he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." I should have stated this in my letter, and many other things, but I fear I have already too much wounded Madame Necker. I should like to see what Mr. Gisborne and Mr. Wilberforce will write to him.

I send this to Mr. Hart Davis, and hope it will not be overweight. I thank God I am considerably better, but not likely to leave my room till a change of weather. I grieve that Madame Necker should have ascribed almost superhuman perfection to her cousin, especially such an elevation of piety.

Digitized by Google

I am glad you are all well and happy together. May you long continue so, prays

Your's very faithfully,

H. More.

Extract of a letter from Mrs. H. More to Hart Davis, Esq.

Barley Wood, July 31, 1821.

My dear Sir,

I cannot but rejoice that you were present at the coronation, which I conceive to have been the *acmé* of human grandeur. The splendour must have been almost overcoming, and the mere ceremony of the pageant was elevated by the cause which gave occasion to it, and dignified by the religious solemnities, which made so affecting a part of it.

I am exceedingly delighted with Dean Milner's sermons. Though they were not all finished for the press, and some of them are printed with shameful negligence, yet I have seldom met with any Discourses more to my taste. They are devoutly practical; entirely free from all dogmatism and all controverted points. They come straight home to the heart and conscience. So much simplicity of language, such honest yet temperate earnestness, from so great a mind, and so distinguished a scholar, is very pleasing. He was said to be a high Calvinist, but I defy any critic to detect one sentiment *peculiar* to Calvinism throughout the two volumes. A high-toned morality and a scrutinizing spirit

Digitized by Google

of holiness appear everywhere. I knew the Dean very well, and a merrier man I never knew.

From the same to the same.

(Extract.)

September 20, 1821.

I have a most interesting letter from the Bellevue party. They are in raptures with the king. He desired Mrs. —— herself to show him every part of the great Orphan Asylum, of which she was almost the foundress. The sight of the poor orphans led him to speak in the most tender manner of his own virtuous and revered parents. He made himself patron of the institution. Gave a large donation, with a subscription of £100. per annum.

From the same to the same.

(Extract.)

Barley Wood, Oct. 16, 1821.

My dear Sir,

I had intended, as Dogberry says in the play, 'to bestow all my tediousness upon you;' but that most despotic of tyrants, and most ardent of friends, Sir Thomas Acland, against my most earnest remonstrances and positive refusals, has actually sent down Pickersgill to paint my picture! He is staying in the house, and keeps me so close to the miserable work of sitting, that it was with difficulty I stole

Digitized by Google

time for the inclosed letter, which being important, I trouble you with. I dreaded this foolish business even so much as to lie awake about it; but I go through it, hitherto, better than usual.

November 16, 1821.

You know it was my hard fate to sit for two portraits, lest the one friend should think his a copy of the other. It happens that each proprietor[1] likes his own best. I believe the painter has made the best of my withered visage. You are aware with what extreme reluctance I submitted to the operation.

From the same to the same.

(Extract.)

October 21, 1822.

I was much affected yesterday with a report of the death of my ancient and valued friend Mrs. Garrick. She was in her hundredth year! I spent above twenty winters under her roof, and gratefully remember not only their personal kindness, but my first introduction through them, into a society remarkable for rank, literature, and talents. Whatever was most distinguished in either, was to be found at their table. He was the very soul of conversation.

My dear Sir, most faithfully your's,

H. More.

[1] Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, and Lovell Gwatkin, Esq. both intimate and much valued friends, and the latter one of the oldest.

Digitized by Google

Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

November, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I was not quite well enough to write by Charles, and he neglected to tell you of the vexation which has for the last three weeks hung over my head. You know the wearisome importunity of certain friends about my sitting for my picture, and the sincere pertinacity of my refusal. They have, however, got Mr. Pickersgill (who painted the Bishop of Gloucester in our parlour, and whose talents are held in the highest estimation) to come down. It is a cruel vexation to me, in every point of view. I have opposed it with all my might. Morally and physically it is grievous to me. Think of the fatigue it will give me, and the great uncertainty of my health from one day to another! Then comes my great objection, that with my fragment of life, a few, out of the very few days which remain to me should be wasted to rescue for a few years from oblivion, my haggard withered face. I would cheerfully make the artist a present for the loss of his time, if he would let me off; but they would not hear of it, and our dear B—— is as bad as the worst of them. For *your* sakes I am sorry it is likely to take place while you are here; (the beginning of next week perhaps); for my own sake it will be a great relief to me. My anxiety about this foolish business has had its share in retarding my recovery, and I la-

Digitized by Google

ment that I should have yielded my quiet and comfort to the too pressing solicitations of friendship.

I am ashamed that the first use I make of my pen should be on such a paltry subject. As I hope to see you so soon, I will leave other matters unsaid. God bless you both.

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

(Extract.)

Barley Wood, 1821.

My dear Friends,

I got your letter only last night, and if I do not hurry a few lines this morning, it will be too late to catch you at Ludlow. Indeed, I fear it will be so as it is. I am glad, that in spite of this unsummer-like weather you have had so much enjoyment of so sublime a portion of the sublime Creator's works. Your rencontre with and account of Mr. Roberts, &c. gave me pleasure. *He* has been very kind to that which little deserved kindness, the Bible Rhymes. I seldom quit my room, on account of the damp, and never the house.

Mr. M——, and a few other hard-working Christians are endeavouring to put in practice, Chalmers's local scheme for general instruction in religion in large cities, Glasgow, London, &c. by inducing some pious person to undertake twenty. I believe they are going to try it in Smithfield, and he hopes they shall at least make them know that there is a God and Christ, a heaven and hell. Mr. Wilber-

Digitized by Google

force is settled in Morden Park, Hatsel's place, and lives in such profound retirement, (which was his object in settling there), that he does not see above three and thirty at breakfast!

I was not in a very writing mood, but I thought bad would be better than none.

To you both, an ever affectionate Friend,

H. More.

From Mr. John Sheppard[1] to Mrs. H. More.

My dear Madam,

Though it was impossible not to feel a strong *inclination* to express my thanks for the very obliging and gratifying letter with which you lately favoured me, yet I should have suppressed it, from the conviction that a stranger ought not thus to intrude on your attention, had I not invented a plea for writing, (as we can generally do in favour of what we wish) which I have thought would render me more excuseable, than in merely troubling you with my acknowledgments. Yet I confess I doubt the *soundness* of my plea, for you have had so many public, and doubtless so many private testimonies to the value of your writings, that the slight additional one I have to offer, from an obscure correspondent abroad, will be scarcely worth notice. It would certainly be not at all so in the scale of your literary reputation; that needs no added weight to fix it firmly. I am convinced also that your Christian

[1] Author of 'Thoughts on Private Devotion.'

Digitized by Google

progress has led you to look above *this* reward, and to contemplate that good of which you have been the instrument, with a far higher satisfaction.

During the journey on which your letter so kindly comments, I made the acquaintance of some ladies, natives of Holland, resident in Switzerland, who, with their father and some other friends, were my companions in travelling through Piedmont and Lombardy: they had gained some knowledge of our language, and I promised to send at my return, a small collection of English books. Among these were 'Cœlebs,' and the 'Strictures on Female Education.' But I have since received a letter from which I make the following extract.

'Nous faisons ces bonnes lectures tout haut et en famille, &c. Nous avons debutés par Mrs. More's Strictures. Jamais je n'ai rien lu de si beau, de si bon et de si vrai, sur ce sujet si interessant. Combien on serait heureux si on pouvait graver dans son esprit et dans son cœur toutes les leçons de vertu qu'elle nous y donne, et si on pouvait se rendre le doux temoignage qu'on suit toujours le chemin qu'elles trace pour parvenir au veritable bonheur. Je relirai sans doute cet excellent ouvrage, et avec un nouveau plaisir. J'ai un peu l'idée d'en faire quelques traductions, pour communiquer quelques unes des idées de Mrs. More, sur l'education à une de mes amies qui éleve ses enfans. Je suis embarassée sur le choix. Il faudrait tout traduire; tout est egalement intéressant; et je recule devant la grandeur de l'entreprise. Maintenant nous lisons 'Display,' par Miss

Digitized by Google

Taylor; c'est un excellent livre que nous lisons avec beaucoup d'interet.' In a subsequent letter—'depuis ma dernière nous n'avons lu que Cœlebs en Anglais. J'avoue que je n'etois pas fachée par ci par là de l'avoir lu premièrement en français?' As this family did not appear to have by any means a high standard of Christian feeling and duty, and had probably relaxed in their attention to religious observances since quitting their own country, (where there is more regard to public worship than in Protestant Switzerland,) I was particularly pleased at the candour and freedom from prejudice with which they seem to have read your excellent works, in which higher principles and habits are so unreservedly enforced. There is great need of some awakening impulse among foreign Protestants in general, for I fear that your observations on the coldness and Socinianism prevalent at Geneva, are quite as much, if not more, applicable to many parts of Switzerland and Germany. In my late journey through Hanover and Prussia, I had too many occasions of witnessing the neglect of public worship, and want of zeal among the clergy. There are indeed some very exemplary exceptions to the latter at Berlin, but speaking generally, there appears, in both kingdoms, to say the least, a great deal of apathy. At Wurtemberg, and in the church where Luther frequently preached, I heard a dull essay, addressed to as dull an assembly, from the words, "Let him that stole, steal no more," and could not but feel how the ardent energy of the old reformer would have poured forth indignation at

Digitized by Google

such a successor. But the most melancholy estimate which we could form of the religious state of Protestant Germany, would be from the University of Gottingen, where, among eleven or twelve hundred students, I am convinced, from observation, during six weeks' stay, not fifty can be found in all the churches on the Sabbath. The attendance of the inhabitants is also exceedingly remiss; and a very eminent lecturer on the New Testament, while in public he seems to aim at lowering, rather than confirming the belief of his pupils, and treats the Scriptures with as much freedom as he would Herodotus or Livy, does not scruple, as I was credibly informed, to avow to those with whom he is intimate, his total scepticism. But to estimate the general state of the German Universities by that of Gottingen, would be unjust, as I doubt you are aware it has long been distinguished for what is termed neology. Large numbers of the German clergy, however, receive their first impressions of Christianity there, and we may too surely infer that the lowest form of Unitarianism, if not infidelity, is thus received by many.

I was at Gottingen during the secular festival of the Reformation, when the church, usually almost empty, was crowded to the full, and a number of these professors and students received, and not a few I fear profaned by receiving it, the Lord's Supper. Degrees are solemnly conferred on this occasion; and those who are created doctors in Theology, are invested, among other ceremonies, with the ring of Luther, which he received as a present from one of

Digitized by Google

the princes who patronized him, and which has been ever since preserved. It is, I think, not to be doubted that the high and universal honour to that great man's memory, though in some of his countrymen it arises from a right feeling, i. e. from a grateful sense of what he did *for* religion, yet in many it springs from the belief that his courage in unmasking superstition led the way for *their* emancipation *from* religion. I have been led unawares into much greater length than I designed; but now, having gone so far in offering you rather a gloomy subject of reflection, I will not quit it without mentioning a circumstance of a more pleasing kind. I found on a second visit to the superstitious city of Cologne, which I made on my return in December, that a great desire for the scriptures had then recently arisen among the Roman Catholic population of that place and its environs. Notwithstanding the disapprobation of their priests, they received them with eagerness from the Protestant clergyman, who had been applied to for as many as from one to two hundred copies in a single day. There are some very pious and zealous Protestants in that place, among whom is the lady of Count Charles von Der Lippe, whom I had the pleasure of seeing both at Cologne and Cleves, the latter being their summer residence, by introduction from Dr. Steinkopff. Such a disposition among Catholics, and the instances which exist of an active and liberal piety in individuals of that communion, encourage the hope that reformation may one day take place by some hidden, but

Digitized by Google

effectual movement within the church. But the general state of the continent must appear to the friends of Christianity mournfully distinguished from that of our own country; and I have been inclined, since I returned from abroad, to enter more fully into the spirit of a remark contained in your Hints for the instruction of our lamented Princess: 'can we help regarding its superiority to other countries as the result of a providential destination, as really divine, though not so miraculous, as that which gave true religion to ancient Judæa?'

The satisfaction you express at the simple piety of the mountaineers, with whom I have conversed in the Valley of Montiers, is gratifying to me, as an instance of that charity which, (notwithstanding the acrimony and bigotry which some individuals of all parties indulge) is, I trust, increasing. I met with a most amiable example of it in the eminent minister of the French reformed church at Amsterdam, M. Chevalier, who suggested the desirableness of a more cordial union and correspondence between Christians of all countries and of all persuasions who agree in the leading points of faith and practice.

Nothing but the interest you take in the state of religion, evinced by the laudable exertions you have made to promote it at Geneva, could excuse me for addressing to you so long a letter. Allow me to repeat my thanks for your kind attention, and to assure you of the unfeigned respect with which I am, dear Madam,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

JOHN SHEPPARD.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

Barley Wood, Oct. 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am for the next week under a bondage to me the most oppressive of all those which have no real distress in them. An ardent friend, Sir Thomas Acland, who by the most affectionate tyranny, is sure to carry every thing his own way, has actually, against my vehemently-repeated refusal, sent down Mr. Pickersgill from London, and your poor old friend is condemned, sorely against her will, and on the verge of eternity, to see 'the lack-lustre eye,' and corrugated visage, snatched a little while from oblivion. The picture is for Sir Thomas, and at his expense. Besides the fatigue of sitting four hours a-day to a painter, I object, in a moral point of view, that so much time out of my little fragment of life should be so spent.

Your letter comprehends so many interesting topics, that with my scanty leisure, I hardly know which to touch upon. The most important, surely, is your fervent gratitude for your uncommon domestic felicities. You do not fall under the classical complaint, 'Oh happy, if they knew their happiness.' You may translate it back into Latin.

My health, I thank the great Giver, is rather better than usual. I am a most atmospherical animal, and rise and fall with the barometer. You will judge favourably of my orthodoxy, when I tell

Digitized by Google

you I have lately entertained four bishops; not a conclave, for their visits were at different times.

I am greatly interested for the Greeks. I cannot bear that the descendants of those illustrious ancients, of whom somebody says, that

'Half our learning is their epitaph.'

should be the victims of those worse than pagans. I hope your grandsons will see the university projected by Lord Guilford, in the Ionian islands, in a flourishing state. Ithaca I think, is to be the scene. A friend of mine has conversed much with a young Greek, placed at Cambridge by his Lordship. This gentleman *wished* to add a professorship for Theological studies. Altogether, it is a grand scheme.

I wish I had time, (for I am anxious you should receive my acknowledgment of your bounty) to enter at large into the subject of instructing the poor. I have thought much on the subject. I think there is *ultraism* on both sides of the question. My views of popular instruction are narrow; the views of some others I think *too* narrow. I will give you a sketch of my own poor practice at setting out, but opposition obliged me to lower it.

Not the very poor only are deplorably ignorant. The common farmers are as illiterate as their workmen. It therefore occurred to me to employ schoolmasters, who to sound piety, added good sense and competent knowledge. In addition to instructing *all* the poor children in the parish on Sundays, at my expence, I directed him to take the

Digitized by Google

farmers' sons on week-days, at a low price, to be paid by them, and to add writing and arithmetic to reading, which was all I thought necessary for *labourers'* children. The master carefully instructed these higher boys also in religious principles, which the fathers did not object to when they got it gratuitously. I had long thought that the knowledge necessary for persons of this class, was such as would qualify them for constables, overseers, church-wardens, jury-men, and especially tend to impress them with the awful nature of an oath, which I fear is too commonly taken without any sense of its sanctity. Further than this I have never gone.

Now I know the ultra-educationist would despise these limits. I know not if you have seen a book on popular education, written by a man of great talents. Truth compels me to bear my public testimony against his extravagant plan, which is, that there is *nothing* which the poor ought not to be taught; they must not stop short of science. They must learn history in its widest extent: Goldsmith's Greece is nothing;—he recommends Mitford, &c. Now the absurdity of the thing is most obvious; supposing they had money to *buy* such books, where would they find time to read them, without the neglect of all business, and the violation of all duty? And where is all this to terminate? Only cast back your eye upon Athens, where the upper gallery pronounced sentence on Sophocles and Euripides, and an herb-woman could detect the provincial accent of a great philosopher. Yet was there ever a more

Digitized by Google

turbulent, ungovernable rabble? St. Paul tells you how they spent their time. 'It was only to tell or to hear of some new thing.'

I have exerted my feeble voice to prevail on my few parliamentary friends, to steer the middle way between the scylla of brutal ignorance, and the charybdis of a literary education. The one is cruel, the other preposterous.

I have poured out my crude opinions so rapidly, and with so little attention to exactness, that I fear you will hardly decypher my meaning.

If you take much interest in this subject, I wish you would look at the book I have been alluding to. You will find in it much that is able, and much that is true and rational; but I should greatly dread the adoption of the writer's scheme, if there were any probability of its taking place.

I wish you would read Isaiah, with an eye to the powerful efforts now making for the conversion of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Their restoration is so strongly and obviously predicted by this most enlightened of prophets and sublime of writers, that it is impossible to overlook it.

For a person who promised to let you off with only a few lines, I think I have been tedious enough. With my fervent prayers for your temporal and eternal happiness, believe me ever,

My dear friend,

Your faithful and affectionate,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From the Rev. D. Wilson to Mrs. H. More.

1821.

MY DEAREST MADAM,

I have to thank you for your very kind letter, and for the donation which preceded it. I can assure you your letter took me by surprise. I had no expectation of your giving yourself the fatigue of writing, oppressed as I know you are by a thousand engagements, and incapacitated as I feared you might be by illness: the pleasure however was so much the more vivid. I do bless the Almighty's goodness that your health has been so surprisingly restored; and I hope and pray that you may still have that flow of spirits and that measure of strength and vigour which may enable you to continue to aid, in all the various ways in which you have so long done it,—the cause of piety, and truth, and peace amongst us. Thank God! the prospect, I do think, brightens. The appointment at Brighton, is really an event of considerable moment. The delusion on the queen's question is now rapidly rolling back its tide; a more lively impression of the importance of serious Christianity is, I think, evidently left on the mind of the great, from the sad disorders which have taken place; and the character of the clergy is still rising. The great religious institutions are assuming a new importance, by becoming the means of uniting the church in prayer for the effusion of the Holy Spirit. In London, as in Bristol, zealous efforts are making to excite

Digitized by Google

universal attention to this subject. The antinomian abomination has spent itself, or been forced back into its ordinary ambushes.

I am now at work on the argument on the *propagation* of the scriptures; my next topic will be the *inspiration;* my mind is astonished as I go on, not more at the richness of the subject than at the injustice with which I think it has often been treated.

I am your most affectionate and faithful,

D. WILSON.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

Barley Wood, May, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I was exceedingly gratified by the prompt and warm expression of your partial kindness. It was an encouragement of which I really stood in need. For when I come to see my meagre 'Rhymes'[1] in print, I more fully feel their deficiency. I obeyed your injunctions and fell immediately to the filling up of gaps; but I found it more easy to fill space than supply intellect. I have, however, introduced the plagues of Egypt; a comparison between the songs of Deborah and Hannah, and their characters; Samuel, &c. with additions to Malachi and Revelations, the whole about a dozen pages. I really think the title (which you reprobate) has been

[1] A little work called 'Bible Rhymes,' which she wrote about this time for young persons.

Digitized by Google

injurious, but I thought there could not be too mean a sign held out to such shabby entertainment. I was wrong in allowing a large edition; had it been small, I should have been able to insert the additions sooner; not that I expect it will succeed.

I was grieved to be defrauded of your expected visit by the early appointment of the Bristol meetings. All the orators came to see me. All were old friends except Mr. Jowett, with whom I was singularly pleased. I thought him almost too good for a missionary; I mean, that a coarser tool, with equal piety, but stronger stamina, might be fitter for the wear-and-tear work of holy itinerancy. Apropos, I have had a visit from my valuable friend Dr. S. from Canada. It was pleasing to hear a man of his birth speak of it as a great advancement, that he was now appointed to be a travelling missionary instead of a local one! I find him much improved in spirituality; but, as employed by the —— Society, he must, of course, be discreet. He has been the honoured instrument since we last met, of causing twenty-four churches to be built. There are twenty thousand Protestants between Quebec and Montreal.

I have received from different hands a glorious account of the prosperity of the annual festival. All bear testimony to the devotional sublimity of the generality of the speeches. Such concord is in heaven!

The king's new chaplain has kindly communicated to me so many pleasant and promising circumstances

Digitized by Google

relative to his royal patron as quite exhilarate me. He spoke highly of his sermon as well as of the 'Life of Buchanan,' which happily had been recommended to him by his physician. There are some strong things in that life which I should have feared were indigestible. We must not expect too much or too soon. We must pray both for the patron and the chaplain—both are in trying situations.

How do the 'Evidences' go on. Pray make haste. If they do not come out this winter, my chances of reading them will be but small.

Your affectionate friend,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. D. Wilson.

New Year's Day, 1822.

My dear Sir,

I believe I am right in sending to *you* as Secretary, my subscription to the London Clerical Society. I hope this excellent Institution will prosper, as we must chiefly look to it hereafter for right-minded ministers in this non-preferring age of serious men.

I have just had a letter from the Bishop of St. David's, to say that every thing is now settled for building his college, and that they only wait for an act of parliament. I have taken great interest in this business, and have been a humble subscriber to it for seventeen years. It will be an æra in the

Digitized by Google

history of Wales, and I hope it will raise the tone both of literature and piety in their clergy.

I am very deeply concerned to hear of your weak state of health. Do, I pray you, work less, that you may work longer. You are public property, and the public has a right to insist on your sparing yourself. I am grieved that *the work* must stand still; but that may be resumed, when preaching, which requires body as well as soul, cannot. Your excellent sermon on Temptation was our Sunday night's family reading. I am glad to see you notice among other dangers, *light reading*. I have lately reflected much on the alarming increase of this perilous pleasure. I really think it is, at this period, doing more harm than cards; I mean family cards, not gaming. I would the evil were confined to the worldly and the dissipated: the religious world, of whom I am almost as much afraid as the worldly world, (if I may use the expression,) are falling much into it. An active, and, I hope, a pious clergyman told me the other day, that he had just bought a cheap edition of Lord Byron, but boasted that he had burnt Don Juan. I am far from putting Byron and Walter Scott on a level, the one is an anti-moralist indeed, but surely I may say the other is a non-moralist. His *poetry* I read as it came out with that pleasure and admiration which great talents must always excite; but I do not remember in it any of those practical precepts or that sound instruction which may be gleaned from some of our older poets; though they often offended against that decency which Scott invariably ob-

Digitized by Google

serves. I am now reading 'Prior's Solomon,' an exquisite poem, in my opinion, abounding in instruction and beauty; yet scarcely any body I meet with has read it. Of the fashionable reading, if there were no other evil than the immense consumption of *time*, the mischief would not be small. Thirty volumes of Walter Scott's novels have in the succession of a very few years covered every table. Figure to yourself in a large family, where every one reads for himself, the thousands of hours that have been thus swallowed up. In the articles of music, dress, and reading, I could wish to see a somewhat wider separation between the two classes above named. The useful reading, compared with the idle, like our medicine compared with our food, is but as grains to pounds. The evil does not merely consist in the reading itself, but in its disqualifying tendency for that reading which is good. It is not that old age has made me insensible to the charms of genius. In that one respect I think I am not grown obtuse. I have been really looking for time to read one or two of Walter Scott's novels. In my youth Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison were the reigning entertainment. Whatever objections may be made to them in certain respects, they contain more maxims of virtue and sound moral principle than half the books called moral. A large volume of valuable aphorisms has been collected from them, abounding in practical lessons for the conduct.

A letter from dear Mr. Wilberforce this moment tells me that poor —— is removed to a better world!

Digitized by Google

May God comfort them all. They have motives of comfort in every point of view.

I am interrupted, and can only add Miss Frowd's best regards.

Ever, my dear friend,

Your's faithfully,

H. More.

In the spring of the year 1822, Mrs. More was suddenly seized with an inflammation of the chest, of which the symptoms were so formidable as to allow but faint hopes that her frame could withstand their violence: they were however subdued, but not till the severity of the remedies which were applied had nearly undermined all her natural strength. Dr. Carrick, who was her physician in this critical illness, acknowledged how greatly his art was seconded by the cheerful composure of her mind. Her sufferings under the paroxysms of her complaint, were said by those who principally attended her during the course of it, to have been very sharp and trying, and to have given occasion to new displays of her powers of thought and expression, directed by the soundest scriptural cultivation, to the best and highest objects; but when any thing like admiration of her cheerful acquiescence in the divine will, fell from the lips of her friends about her, she took pains to assure them, that what seemed like courage, was none of it her own, 'it is, (she exclaimed,) all superinduced strength; none of it is natural to me.'

In discoursing upon her illness, when the result

Digitized by Google

was most precarious, with one of her friends, she said, 'If I could determine for life or death by holding up my hand, I would not do it. If, (she continued,) I have given any sign of progress in a religious life, it is that I have never felt reluctant to give all due credit to the virtue and piety of those who did not love me, and have heartily and sincerely rejoiced in all the good that was in them, or has happened to them.' When reference was afterwards made to some little inconsistencies in the conduct of a person of pious character, she exclaimed with a sigh, 'Ah; the weaknesses of the wise, and the errors of the good, would make many more volumes than I have written, or should like to read. When I turn my thoughts upon the world, there are but three things there which deeply interest me—the state of the church—the religious progress of the king—and the abolition of slavery.' At every interval from pain she was more disposed to converse than was advisable for her, indeed her thoughts never appeared to flow in a fuller and clearer current. She observed of herself, that she never felt so sensible of the majesty and beauty of the Psalms, or so capable and desirous of writing a commentary upon them, as when upon a sick bed; and added, that Bishop Porteus, whenever he heard she was confined to her bed by sickness, always said he looked for a new book from her. It is not unworthy of being recorded, that during all the multiplied and dangerous illnesses with which she had been visited, most of them attended with strong paroxysms of fever, her mind was never observed to lose

Digitized by Google

its strength, or sink into delirium, till the sickness that overtook her in her eighty-ninth year, and carried her to her rest. In one of her conversations, she observed, that repose and quiet had been the blessings she had most longed for, during the greater part of her existence: that she had retired from London, thinking to possess some years of tranquillity and calm reflection between the world and the grave, and with the hope of enjoying literary leisure, rural employments, and religious meditations; but that it was not thought good for her by an all-wise providence, to have these wishes gratified; for that very soon after taking possession of Cowslip Green, a career of labour opened to her in the various schools which she found it her duty to establish in the surrounding villages, and which kept her in constant exertion: that the Repository Tracts next succeeded, which robbed her of all her leisure for several years; and during the latter period of her life, a constant succession of visitors and letters had left her no time that could be called her own, save that which had been purchased by frequent illness.

Then returning to the earlier part of her life, which she passed in more promiscuous society, she mentioned John Wesley's having once said to her sister, 'Tell her to live in the world; *there* is the sphere of her usefulness; they will not let *us* come nigh them.' On a particular day, when her disorder seemed to be mastering her frame, her recollections appeared to be more than ordinarily clear, and to come full of instruction to herself, and to those

Digitized by Google

who were with her. Among other things, she said she owed her first serious and decided impressions to Sir James Stonehouse, and mentioned his having once told her, that in the days of his miserable infidelity, he was so mad against God, that when travelling abroad as a young man, he took pains to converse as much as possible with the French postillions, that he might gain from them some new methods of swearing.

She had perhaps, she said, written too much; yet she sometimes regretted that she had not followed up her own serious intention, of writing a little treatise, expressly on 'The law of consideration, which was so continually and heedlessly violated in the innumerable little circumstances and situations of life. To particularize a few cases,—with respect to tradesmen, to avoid taking long credit, which causes them so much anxiety and distress, and not unfrequently ruin: and not to change them capriciously, or for one fault;—with respect to servants, not to give them trouble wantonly, because we will not condescend to think it of any consequence;—towards those who are subject to us in any way, to avoid those little inconsiderate acts which point out to them in a painful manner their inferiority;—with respect to lodging-houses, to be scrupulously careful not to injure the furniture of them. Of all which rules and principles, no human being exhibited a more beautiful practical comment than herself.

In speaking of the divine attributes, she remarked, 'there are some qualities which the Almighty Father could not display—as humility, resignation,

Digitized by Google

patience under suffering; and it is amongst the innumerable benefits of our blessed Saviour's incarnation, that he could set us a perfect pattern even of *them*.'

The day after this conversation, her illness considerably increased, and when the friend whose edifying privilege it was to watch her sick bed, came to her in the morning, and lamented over her sufferings; she exclaimed with a gentle smile, "Shall I have received so much good at the hand of the Lord, and shall I not receive evil?" "I became dumb, and opened not my mouth, for thou didst it." Thou wilt lay no more upon me, than thou wilt enable me to bear. She then lamented having been obliged so constantly to disturb the servant who slept in her apartment; 'but indeed, (she added,) my strokes were heavier than my groanings. I dread my remedies, (she continued), almost more than my disease; but it is my duty to submit to them, and I had rather suffer from yielding up my own will, than triumph by having it.'

During the various fluctuations of her severe complaint, she one day said, (alluding to an expression used by a friend, 'The old man dies hard,' in reference to the remaining corruption that struggled in the mind of a person recently awakened to the truth.) 'The old *woman* dies hard!' 'I do not think,' she added, 'that I am *immediately* going to die, but I feel persuaded I shall not recover, so that that which I greatly feared is come upon me. I shall perhaps be for some time bed-ridden! but it is all nothing—or,

Digitized by Google

rather, it is all good! I desire, as Dr. Hammond says, 'not to *rather* anything! Yet she could not help occasionally crying out, "Oh had I the wings of a dove!" Being one day about to write a tribute of gratitude in the blank leaves of a book to be presented to her physician, a friend expostulated with her against attempting it in so extremely feverish and unfit a state, 'I do not like to trust to a moment,' she answered, 'and when the thing is once done, I cast all thought of it behind me.' 'Ah,' she cried, 'and I hope in a higher sense, if I *have* been permitted to do any thing, that I cast all my poor doings behind me! I continually,' she added, 'repeat that sentiment in Young, for it is quite *my* feeling,

'Forgive my faults,—forgive my *virtues* too.'

Her illness increased about this time so much as greatly to diminish the hopes of her recovery, and she gave many evident and affecting indications of her inward desire to depart. She begged a friend to pray for her, that she might not disgrace her Christian profession in her last agonies; and when that friend expressed her full confidence that her heavenly Father would not desert her, 'Indeed, she answered, 'it would be sadly ungrateful to doubt it, for he has never suffered my faith to fail for an instant: it is not always in equal exercise, but it is like my disorder (alluding to her internal soreness, which manifested itself upon pressure) when I seek for it, it is always there.' When one of her friends, seeing her in much suffering, could

Digitized by Google

not forbear lamenting over her, 'Consider,' she said, 'every stroke comes from a merciful father, they are all given in number, measure, and weight; not one more than is necessary.' Shortly after she began to enumerate all the various seizures of severe illness that she had experienced during the last three years, adding, 'every one of them said to me, "Prepare to meet thy God!" yet still I am not duly prepared, or I should be taken. I enumerate them that I may think upon the long-suffering and sparing goodness of my heavenly father; but if I am not better than I am, after so much loving correction, what should I have been without it!' She afterwards mentioned, as a remarkable circumstance, that the year in which she wrote 'Moral Sketches,'—her seventy-fifth,—was the only one she could recollect of her life, during no part of which she had been confined to her bed.

She one morning told a friend, who came early to her bed-side, that she had enjoyed, during the past night, nearer and more endearing views of the eternal world than she had ever before been favoured with, and was able to bring to her mind every text of scripture which bore upon the subject; and that she had amused her sleepless hours with paraphrasing them. 'I seem,' said she, 'to long as much for the holiness, as the happiness of heaven; it is such a blessed idea to be delivered from the possibility of sinning!' The following night was a peculiarly suffering one, and after describing it to her anxious friends, she exclaimed, 'Heaviness may endure for a night, but

Digitized by Google

joy cometh in the morning.' Ah! what a morning will that be when *unceasing* joy will come!' She then dwelt much upon that beautiful text, "I reckon that the sufferings," &c. 'it was not,' she said 'a slight, unpremeditated assertion, but made upon *calculation*—'*I reckon*,' he had counted the cost.'

As her strength appeared to be rapidly declining, she mentioned her symptoms to one of her medical attendants, 'But,' continued she, 'I shall still be enabled to fight the battle—for it is not to the strong.' After his departure she repeated the thirty-ninth Psalm, till she came to the verse beginning, "Oh spare me a little," when she broke off, saying, 'that part I will not repeat—it does not express my feeling.' She observed, that she could not but reflect, 'what a happiness it was, both for her dear sister Patty and herself, that they had never had any wild speculations in religion, and had never disturbed themselves about those mysterious parts of scripture which human wisdom was unequal to solve,' and said 'she often thought of what Dr. Stonehouse used to say, 'When I meet with a passage, the hidden meaning of which I cannot penetrate, I tie a knot and go on.' Once more, however, after repeated fluctuations, an abatement of the material symptoms gave renewed hopes of her recovery; she was then reluctantly obliged to take cognizance of some pecuniary concerns: and when speaking on the subject she suddenly interrupted herself, exclaiming, 'Ah! if we had no *better*

Digitized by Google

bank!' When her physician expressed his hopes that she was now beginning to make a progress towards recovery, she said to him, 'I fear I am not thankful enough; but suppose you were going a long journey, to receive a large inheritance, and when almost arrived at its end, were suddenly called back to receive two or three trifling sums of money, would you not be grieved?'

She often remarked, during her illness, that it was one of the evils of sickness to induce selfishness, and was ever suspecting and accusing herself of inattention to the comfort and accommodation of those who attended upon her. She even recollected some distressed persons whom she had never seen, and had only once heard of, when they were mentioned to her some months before, and directed that further assistance should be conveyed to them. It was a relief to her friends to be enabled to read to her, without passing over a sentence, and without fear or reserve, letters which spoke of her departure as a very near and inevitable event.

About this time appeared the Memoir of the late Rev. Thomas Scott, and 'she was,' says a lady who had the satisfaction of reading to her many parts of it at her bed-side at intervals, as she was able to hear it, 'delighted with the history of this eminent servant of God. Perhaps, indeed, there were very few persons whose sentiments on religious subjects were in general more in accordance with her own. She told us that she used, during her former residences in London, not only to attend his preaching at the Lock, but frequently to go from the west-

Digitized by Google

end of the town to Bread Street, to his lecture there, often walking nearly six miles to hear in his northern dialect, the truths of the gospel faithfully delineated.

It is remembered that she remarked upon the letter which treats of the usefulness of human learning, that it should never be forgotten how useful an instrument it was made at the Reformation, and that its revival had immediately preceded the manifestation of our religion, adding, 'No! it should not even be despised as an auxiliary: I put religion on my right hand and learning on my left.' Coming to that part of the Memoir in which Mr. Venn, the father of the late excellent Rector of Clapham, is mentioned with such high and merited esteem, and the failure of whose faculties is lamented as having deprived his friends of the edification which they might otherwise have expected to have received in his sick and dying chamber, she stated that on returning from a visit to Sir Charles Middleton, she was informed that Mr. Venn had expressed a desire to see her once before he died: she instantly repaired to him, and enjoyed with him two hours of instructive and animated conversation; almost immediately after which, his vigour of mind and recollection forsook him, no more to return.

The subject of prayer, as it was one which had often engaged her pen, so it now employed frequently much of her discourse, and in speaking of it as it regarded her own practice, she said, that being under an overwhelming sense of sin, she had

Digitized by Google

given so large a part of her spiritual exercises to confession as to make her sometimes fear she had not devoted enough of them to praise and thanksgiving.

The following extract represents the fluctuating state of her health, and the victorious constancy of her mind.

From Miss Frowd to Mrs. Macauley.

(Extract.)

Barley Wood, Saturday, April 20, 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Could I have confirmed Miss Roberts's more favourable account in her last letter, or have given any still better tidings, I should not have been thus dilatory in imparting so much pleasure. But alas! my report is again less satisfactory than that which Miss R. was enabled to send you. Our kind physician, Dr. Carrick, visited us on Sunday morning; he then proncunced the bad symptoms to be considerably mitigated, and assured us that his valuable patient was generally better; he even talked of granting permission for her to be removed from the bed to the sofa at the end of another week; which week being now nearly elapsed, I am sorry to say has removed us still further than before from seeing that anxiously-desired event accomplished. Almost as soon as the doctor left us on Sunday, a fresh accession of fever came on, with all its attendant evils of intense thirst, head-ache, and dartings through

Digitized by Google

the brain, high pulse, and all the misery of generally increased disease.

The pulse has continued little short of a hundred ever since, very frequently above it, the nights too are for the most part wakeful and restless. But the sweet mind of our dearest friend remains unchanged, except it be that it seems more perfected by suffering.

The dear invalid, unable as she is, resolves to show you, as she says, *once more* her hand-writing.

Believe me, dear Madam, to remain,

Your's truly,

MARY FROWD.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have been thirteen weeks in bed, suspended between this world and the next; *when*, or *whether* I shall quit my bed, belongs to *Him* who governs both worlds. Happily I have nothing to do with events, but cheerfully to submit to them. Pray for me, that my faith fail not. God Almighty bless you all.

H. MORE.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

IT pleased God to restore this eminent Christian from the bed of sickness and suffering to the use of her still powerful faculties for the benefit of society. Two of her friends who had for many months been hovering near, or watching over her, being now about to depart on a distant journey, she took an affecting leave of them, commending them to the Almighty arm for protection, and concluding with these words, 'if we see each other no more in this world, may we meet where, as Leighton says, 'no friend ever goes out, and no enemy ever comes in; where there will be the absence of sin, and the presence of God, for evermore.'' Her recovery, however, continued to be progressive, and the autumn of 1822 witnessed her restoration to nearly her former state of health. Barley Wood now again became a place of general resort, many being anxious to seize the opportunity of seeing her once, and her old friends being eager to secure

Digitized by Google

the advantage of seeing her *once more*. Her correspondences were likewise in a considerable measure resumed, and it was at this time that she received an interesting communication on the subject of America, in which, amongst much other matter, she was informed that a drawing of Barley Wood having found its way to that continent, a large number of engravings from it had been executed by order of the American board of Missions, whose intention it was to dedicate the profits of their sale to the erection of a building for a school-house in the island of Ceylon, which was to receive the name of Barley Wood.

The following sprightly lines which she sent to Sir T. Acland just before her dangerous seizure, must be introduced with a short preface. There being at this period various repositories opened at Clifton and Bath for the benefit of certain charities, she sent thither some articles of her own knitting, which were immediately purchased for twenty times their intrinsic value. Sir T. Acland bespoke the first pair of garters, for which he paid a crown, and when finished she accompanied them with the following poetical address:

TO SIR THOMAS DYKE ACLAND, BART. WITH A PAIR OF GARTERS OF MRS. H. MORE'S KNITTING.

Slowly, yet gladly to my valued friend,
Th' enclosed most faultless of my works I send.
Two cantos make the whole; surprised you'll see
They're better for their strict identity;

Digitized by Google

Length—in my previous works so worthy blame,
Here, the just meed of your applause may claim.
If all my former compositions found
For critic harshness true and solid ground,
None of my ancient sins you here will see,
Except incurable tautology.
Not even Reviewers here can find a botch,
British, nor Quarterly, nor scalping Scotch.
The deep logician, though he sought amain
To find false reasoning, here might seek in vain.
Quibbling grammarians may this work inspect,
Yet in no bungling Syntax spy defect:
Its geometric character's complete,
The parallels run on, but never meet.
Though close the knots, all casuists must agree,
Solution would but break the unity.
Unravelled mysteries shall here be read,
Till time itself shall break the even thread;
Nor could the rhetorician find, nor hope,
One ill-placed metaphor, one faulty trope.
High claims in this rare composition meet,
Soft without weakness; smooth without deceit.
Say not as o'er this learned work you pore,
'This Author nothing knows of Classic lore;'
The Roman satirist's self might laud my plan,
For to the end I keep as I began.
Though some its want of ornament may blame,
Utility, not splendour, was my aim.
Not ostentatious I—for still I ween,
Its worth is rather to be *felt* than *seen*.
Around the feelings still it gently winds;
If lost, no comfort the possessor finds;
Retired from view, it seeks to be obscure,
The public gaze it trembles to endure.
The sober moralist its use may find,
Its object is not loose, it aims to *bind*.
No creature suffers from its sight or touch;
Can Walter Scott say more; can Byron say so much?
One tribute more, my friend, I seek to raise,
You've given indeed a *Crown*, give more—*your praise*.

Barley Wood, Dec. 22, 1821.

Digitized by Google

The following letter to Sir W. Pepys was almost the first product of her pen after her recovery:

Barley Wood, Aug. 19, 1822.

At length, through the goodness of a gracious God, I am once more able to write a few lines to one of my oldest, most interesting, and most valued friends. I have been in bed six months with a fever as severe as it was durable. Even at my advanced time of life, I was bled seven times in a few weeks, with other sharp discipline. The mercies of my heavenly Father during this trial, have been great and numerous. Of the first sixty nights, I passed forty without one hour's entire sleep, yet I had never one moment's delirium, and scarcely any discomposure. I had a most skilful physician, affectionate and disinterested,—Dr. Carrick, of Clifton. Another mercy it was, that I have had the whole time the attendance of a kind young friend,—an excellent companion, of a cultivated mind, warm affections, genuine piety, and amiable manners. She has received my company, for I was allowed to see none; visited my schools; managed my friendly societies of poor women in distant parishes; read to me, and written all my letters. But I have not yet named all my mercies; and here you, my dear friend, come in for a portion. I was able to direct all my little charities myself, so that nothing was suspended. In addition to the general state of want, the typhus fever has been making great ravages here; within a mile, ten families were in a dreadful state at once; and

Digitized by Google

from my chamber window were seen two cottages burnt to the ground within a fortnight, one by a flash of lightning. Through your generous bounty I was enabled materially to mitigate these calamities. The former I relieved, as I commonly do, through the apothecary who attends them and me. I had a little bag pinned to my curtain, from which I sent the almost daily dole, and I believe some lives were saved, and others made more comfortable. And here I cannot but express a wish that all my opulent friends who live in the country, would make a conscientious apothecary the vehicle of their charity in this way. In my little way I have done it these twenty years. But I have said too much of myself. Can you forgive it? This is my first attempt to write. Whether my recovery will be perfect, I am not anxious to know. We have nothing to do with it but to submit. I bless God I enjoyed great tranquillity of mind at the worst, and was willing "to depart, and to be with Christ," had it been HIS will; but I left it in HIS hands who does all things well.

I fervently hope you continue to enjoy your own health, and your family blessings. May they be multiplied to you in this world and perfected in that which is to come! Poor Lord ——. How does this dreadful event stamp vanity on rank, fortune, power, talents, popularity! Might he not have exclaimed with Wolsey, 'If I had served my God as zealously,' &c. May he have found mercy! but he did not give himself time to seek it.

I know not if you are at your villa, but for

Digitized by Google

security shall direct to your town house. Could you and I meet here, how many things we should have to say; but I trust we shall meet in a more perfect state, "through him who loved us, and gave himself for us."

Ever gratefully your's,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Olivia Sparrow.

My dearest Lady Olivia,

After three nights past with much fever, and scarcely any sleep, I think I should neither have the will nor the power to write to any one I loved or cared for less than yourself; and to *find* one I cared for more, I must go a great way.

If you will have the goodness to present my new edition of 'Moral Sketches' to the Duke of Gloucester, I need not suggest to you what is to be said. The substance, however is, that having taken the liberty of presenting a copy of the first edition to his Royal Highness, I could not presume to offer *this*, though I venture to hope that it would not be disagreeable to him and his Royal Consort to peruse, in the *new preface*, the expression of my cordial tribute of veneration to our late excellent and beloved king.

I have not till lately had a correct copy of the speeches of his Royal Highness at the late Bible meeting. They do honour to his head and his heart. So manly, decided, unequivocal a public declaration of his sentiments of attachment to this

Digitized by Google

great cause is gratifying, not only as it marks his patronage of this glorious institution, but as it is, I trust, a pledge, that while he is assisting in dispersing the divine volume to millions, he has himself a personal interest in it. To have sent the Bible to the farthest extremities of the earth, and at the same time to have made it the rule of his own faith and practice, will administer peace and joy to his own soul, when that earth, and all which it contains, shall have past away.

I hope you are as much delighted as I am with the Life of Scott. I always highly honoured and loved the man, and often walked several miles on a Sunday to hear him at the Lock. With the worst voice, the most northern accent, and very plain manners, sound sense and sound piety were yet so predominant, that like Aaron's serpent, they swallowed up all the rest.

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More, to the Miss Roberts's.

August 25, 1822.

My dear Friends,

I suppose you must have a few lines about *nothing*. One of our poets once wrote a poem upon that inexhaustible subject. I believe I owe you two letters, and am not able to pay the debt of one; so hurried am I with the petty cares, and paltry businesses of this worky-day world. Things are going on in it *de mal en pis*. I saw a letter to Mr. M. from ——, who is travelling for his health,

Digitized by Google

giving a most deplorable account of the state of France. The blind bigotry of the royalists,—the spirit of persecution, almost ready to break out into action, the detestation of the people at large of royalty, the triumphs of the slave trade—every thing seems to say that a revolution can be at no great distance; yet this is the country for which we abandon the quiet, the security, the comforts of our own! the country where our children are educated,—the country we fondly visit, imitate, dote upon, worship! 'It cannot, nor it will not come to good.' The increase of our corruption, the downward tendency of the general character, makes me, I think, more willing to depart than all other earthly reasons together. The Bishop of St. David's says, that nothing but a more moral and religious education can stop the dreadful progress of suicide; he might have added of duelling. Dear Wilberforce has been staying at Cromer. The good ———, his lady and daughter, came on Monday, time enough to sit an hour with me before dinner; he is more hard-working than ever, if possible. Oh, what a comfort to think that there 'remaineth a rest for the people of God.'

I have just, through Mr. Butterworth, sent a trifling help to that wonderful Mrs. Judson, towards redeeming two or three more little Burman slaves. I have been also subscribing a few stones to two new churches. Your account of Miss —— is heart-breaking, yet heart-healing, when I think of her piety. I read it to the servants after the sermon last night, and they were much affected.

Digitized by Google

God bless you both. It will raise my respect for your talents if you can read this scrawl.

Your's ever, most affectionately,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

1822.

My dear Friend,

I hope I need not tell you how deeply anxious I have been since I first heard of your painful illness. I had not the heart to write myself, nor to teaze you with a letter; but to-day I have heard with sincere joy of your convalescence. I have now therefore courage to thank you cordially for your last valuable letter. Your account of the state of France is truly awful. Yet I am so very national that I could not grieve much at any event which would drive our infatuated countrymen home again. I lose all temper when I think of the myriads who by their long residence in Paris, can improve in nothing but gambling and desecrating the Sabbath. To say little of their *moral* deterioration, is it nothing to defraud an impoverished government of its taxes, and their home of the benefit of spending their money on their own estates? You see, I am opposed to the sentiment of your friend Horace, for I should have more respect for those who are born to consume the fruits of the earth, if they would but exercise their privilege of consuming. What a tirade! you will say.

Though I did not quit my bed through nearly eight

Digitized by Google

months of severe but salutary suffering, and shall probably never quit my bed-chamber; yet through the unwearied kindness of more Christian friends than any other unworthy creature was ever blest with, I see, through 'my loop-hole of retreat,' or rather hear of, whatever interesting is going on. My conclusion is, that wickedness is more wicked than it used to be, and that goodness is better. Religion certainly has increased much among the higher classes in England, and perhaps still more in Ireland. Yet I will venture to say, even to the religious world, 'I have a few things against thee.' With no small number of happy exceptions, I cannot help observing the common fault of good people—the misappropriation of *time*. I will only instance two particulars, of the evil of which they do not seem to me to be sufficiently aware, *music and light reading*. Twenty years ago, when I wrote 'Strictures on Female Education,' Bishop Cleaver of St. Asaph was at Bath. He was much attached to me, though we differed on many points. Talking on this subject, he was so much of my opinion, that he wrote the following statement, which I inserted in a note in the first volume. 'Suppose your pupil to begin music at six years of age, and to continue the average of four hours a day at her instrument (a very low calculation), Sundays excepted, till she is eighteen, the statement stands thus—three hundred days multiplied by four, the number of hours amounts to 1200; this multiplied by twelve, which is the number of years, amounts to 14,400 hours!' I come now to the *reading*. I

Digitized by Google

pass over Byron, and his compeers in sin and infamy, though I have known some good people who now and then take a slice even of this highly-seasoned corruption. I pass over the more loose and amatory novels, and take my stand on what is said to be safe ground—the novels of that unparalleled genius, Walter Scott. Now I would not have it supposed that I have not read with delight and admiration all his poetry. This is a repast that might be taken with more safety, though certainly not with profit, for it would be difficult to find another specimen of such admirable works with so few maxims for the improvement of life and manners. Let that pass; they gratify the taste without vitiating the imagination: add to this, they were written at reasonably distant periods from each other, so that we were refreshed without being crammed. But we come now to his novels, in which his fecundity is as marvellous as his invention. I have read one volume and a half, in which the powers of his vigorous and versatile mind were conspicuous; but from what I have since read in reviews, I rather see the absence of much evil than the presence of much good. I, of all people, ought not to find fault with authors for writing too much; yet I must return to my first position, the mis-application of time. Had he written before the flood, when perhaps there were not, in all, so many books in the world as he alone has introduced into it, all would have been well; he would have been a benefactor to the antediluvian Hilpahs and Zilpahs. A life of 800 years might have allowed of the perusal of the whole of his

Digitized by Google

volumes; a proportionate quantity in each century would have been delightful; but for our poor scanty threescore years and ten, it is too much. Nay, I under-estimate the chronology; I believe they have all been produced nearly in the odd *ten* years. Now I readily grant that to the mass of readers, the reading of these works should not be prohibited. To the gay, the worldly, and the dissipated, it is perhaps as safe as, and even more safe than any of their other pleasurable resources; being often their only intellectual one. The strong sense, lively exhibition of character, and animated style of these works, certainly afford aliment to the mind. My remarks are limited to a certain class of readers, who have made a strict profession of religion. If, indeed, our time is to be accounted for as scrupulously as the other talents committed to us, how will their reckoning stand? In the case of some, it is almost the only talent they have. Such ought to be especially careful, that this one be rightly employed, as we have an awful lesson on the danger of unprofitableness. Were any one but yourself to see this, they would say, 'Oh, this is a sick old woman in her chamber, who being past the enjoyment of all pleasure herself, would interdict it to us.' This is not exactly the case. I never had more delight in reading than now; and to show that I have not quite lost the little taste I once possessed, I have been reading and admiring as much as ever Scott's beautiful poem, 'The Lady of the Lake.' But you will say, something too much of this.

I have been thinking that, notwithstanding all the

Digitized by Google

boasted improvements of this age, one thing is remarkable. I do not know that any of our modern poets, since Cowper, except Milman and Montgomery, have even *occasionally* written any thing of a serious cast. There are many of them, perhaps, who are men of correct lives, but they have not added to the stock of improving poetry; while, it is singular, that aforetime, even bad men and loose writers have almost uniformly written some one piece on the subject of religion. Pope, who certainly was no saint, bequeathed us a poem of peculiar sanctity. His friend Steele, though manager of the theatre, and a careless liver, wrote 'The Christian Hero.' Waller, a political and moral profligate, has left a poem on 'Divine Love.' Prior, some of whose pieces are licentious, has dedicated all the force of his opulent mind to the production of one of the noblest poems in the English language, his '*Solomon*;' yet I have never once heard that fine piece quoted. These men bore testimony to the truth of a religion which they yet would not allow to influence their conduct. Cowley, in the midst of all his metaphysical obscurities, was not ashamed in that abandoned age to write his 'Davideis.' But how I run on! I am tired of writing, as you will be of reading, yet I had much more to say. I enclose £20. for my subscription to your Clerical Education Society. My improvement in health is almost miraculous. I must not call it *recovery*. At my age, comparative ease demands great gratitude. Pray for me, my dear friend, that my faith fail not.

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

Barley Wood, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I write to you on the anniversary of my seizure. This week twelvemonths I took to my bed, to which I was confined many months. Whether I shall ever quit my chamber is only known to that infinite wisdom in whose hands are the issues of life and death. I have recovered beyond all human expectation; still I have considerable disease in the liver; indeed, during my little fragment of life I must not look for perfect recovery. The health of my body might not be good for my mind. I am, however, able to see my friends for an hour in the middle of the day. It is among the numberless mercies I have experienced, that in so violent and lasting a fever, I was never for one moment delirious, and had no tendency to it. During the last few months I have been able to employ myself in a *new work*, of which I am much more proud than of all my preceding ones, because I am *sure this* will do good. I have been knitting garters, cuffs, and babies' shoes, for the benefit of the Missionary and Jews' Societies.

The Missionary cause flourishes astonishingly, and the time seems to be approaching, when "all the kingdoms of the earth shall be the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ."

I saw both the Randolphs, though at separate times, lately. They seem quite stout and well.

Digitized by Google

What says the sagacious politician, Mr. Huber,—will it be peace or war? We in this country have lived to witness one of the most extraordinary paradoxes that ever puzzled the world; general poverty produced by universal plenty!! The earth has been sick of a plethora, and her bowels have burst with their abundance, and yet distress and want were never so universal. The landed gentlemen can get little rent, some get positively *none*. The farmers are as poor as their labourers, and the labourers in some parts (not here) have only four shillings a-week. We *here* have the best meat at four-pence-half-penny a-pound; bread proportionably cheap. One tax is taken off. I lately gave five shillings for *half*-a-peck of salt, I now give two shillings for a *whole* peck. I do not, however, grow rich, having sustained a considerable loss by the reduction of the five-per-cents.

Have you not read Dean Milner's Sermons? To me, they come more home to the heart and the conscience than almost any I know. But the book that has produced most sensation in the religious world, is the Life of Scott, the commentator, written by his son. It furnishes indeed a striking instance of the power of genuine Christianity to change, or rather to new-make the heart.

I hope Madame Necker is well; when you see or write to her, present me respectfully. *Adieu*, in the literal sense of the word. May a merciful God bless, protect, and direct you both. If we do not meet in this world, may we meet in that better world purchased for us by our adorable

Digitized by Google

Redeemer, who laid down his life, that we might live for ever.

Truly and affectionately your's,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

1823.

My dear Friend,

Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day, which is the anniversary of my last seizure. May God have sanctified it to me! But as dear Bishop Hall says, we carry about us such a luggage of calamities, that we are never secure. Do not be frightened at my writing so soon; it is not my wont, but thinking that your time will soon be more than swallowed up, I wished to trouble you with one more of my scrawls. If I know a little of anything in the world, it is about the poor: you will not have forgotten how eager I have been for their instruction. When I set up our schools, I was considered by the farmers, and even by their betters, as the greatest enemy of my country. 'We shan't have a boy to plough, or a wench to dress a shoulder of mutton,' was the general cry. One of them pointed to Glastonbury Tor, saying, '*We* should make things as bad once more, as when the monks first brought religion and learning there.' We, however, kept the noiseless tenor of our way: the rest of my journey I must finish alone. I have not, at the end of thirty-six years, altered my opinion. But our instructions have been and still are confined to the scriptures,

Digitized by Google

and such books as are preparatory to, and connected with them. At Blagdon we attempted something one step higher, and employed a man, who, in addition to his large Sunday School, taught the farmers' sons on a week-day. My plan was, that while he only appeared to teach writing and arithmetic, he should labour to infuse into them religious principles,—give them such knowledge as should qualify them for churchwardens, constables, jurymen, &c. and impress on them the awful solemnities of an oath. You know how these *sinister* designs of ours were quashed! So it pleased infinite wisdom; doubtless for my deserved humiliation, and to punish my sins.

But how the tide is turned! Our poor are now to be made scholars and philosophers. I am not the champion of ignorance, but I own I am alarmed at the violence of the contrast. Even our excellent C—— seems to me to refine too much; but my friend F—— is an ultra of the first magnitude. The poor must not only read English, but ancient history, and even the sciences are to be laid open to them. Now, not to inquire where would they get the money,—I ask, Where would a labouring man get the time? Time is the fortune of a poor man; and as to what they would gain from Grecian history, why, they would learn that the meanest citizen of Athens could determine on the merits of a tragedy of Euripides: to do which they must always live in a play-house, as indeed they almost always did; they were such critics in language as to detect a foreign accent in a great philosopher, &c.—and yet

Digitized by Google

history does not speak of a more turbulent, unmanageable, profligate people.

I had always a notion, that in a mass, suppose of a hundred children, there might possibly be ten who had superior capacities. Where there is talent, there is commonly energy; and I calculated that these ten, rising above their fellows, would, somehow or other, pick up a little writing and accounts, of which they might make good use in after life; and I have even paid for some sharp boy to go to another school on evenings to learn writing, while the other nine quietly drudged on, perhaps better without it.

If you are not quite tired of me and my senilities, I will proceed to a few facts to illustrate my theory. Not only in the great national schools, but in the little paltry cottage seminaries of three-pence a week, I hear of the most ridiculous instances of the affectation of *literature*. A poor little girl of this stamp was in my room one day when a gentleman was sitting with me. He asked her what she was reading at school. 'Oh, Sir, the whole circle of the sciences!' 'Indeed!' said he, 'that must be a very large work!' 'No, Sir; it is a very little book, it cost half-a-crown.' My friend smiled, and lamented that what was of such easy attainment had cost him so much time and money. I asked a little girl, a servant's child, the other day, what she was reading, and if she could say her catechism. 'O no, Madam, I am learning *Syntax*.'

What I am going to add, you will think an

Digitized by Google

exaggeration, if not an invention, but it is a literal fact. A girl in the next parish being asked what she learnt, answered, 'I learns gography, and the harts and senses.'

In many schools, I am assured, writing and accounts are taught on Sundays. This is a regular apprenticeship to sin. He who is taught arithmetic when a boy, will, when a man, open his shop, on a Sunday. Now, in my poor judgment, all this has a revolutionary as well as irreligious tendency; and the misfortune is, that the growing ultra-ism on the side of learning, falsely so called, will irritate and inflame the old bigotry, which hugged absolute ignorance as hidden treasure, not to be parted with; while that sober measure of Christian instruction which lies between the two extremes, will be rejected by both parties.

Tuesday.—This frail and feverish being of mine did not allow me to finish my letter yesterday, so you must bear with one more absurdity. Many a child is brought to me in my room for a little reward of a tract, &c. Since I began this scrawl a sharp little girl was brought for this purpose. She repeated a short poem extremely well. I then said, 'Now I must examine what you know of the Bible. Who was Abraham?' After some hesitation, she answered, 'I think he was an Exeter man!'

As experience is a sort of substitute for wisdom, I thought these petty details of things under my own eye might be of some use. Happily my own schools go on in the old-fashioned way.

Digitized by Google

I taught the teachers their alphabet thirty years ago, and they continue pious, faithful, and sober-minded. As Mahomet cannot go to the mountain, they come to Mahomet, and Miss Frowd, when weather permits, goes to them. This is, I believe, the longest letter I have written for some time, and happily for you, the longest, probably, I ever shall write. I hope Mrs. W. is better; my kind love to her, and all the young ones.

Ever, my dear friend, your's,

H. More.

From the Rev. Daniel Wilson to Mrs. H. More.

1823.

My dearest Friend,

Your interesting letter by the hand of Miss Frowd, reached me a few weeks since. I hasten to reply.

The case of Mr. T—— interests me extremely; but I can scarcely compose myself to write calmly on any topic when my heart is so full of the sudden death of our valuable friend, Mr. Grant. I had only arrived at home a few hours, from a long tour prescribed by my medical advisers, when the melancholy tidings reached my ears. What a loss! and without a moment's warning. Oh, my dear friend, when I went on Sunday and yesterday, and sat by the side of the afflicted widow, I could scarcely collect myself sufficiently to utter a few words of consolation; and yet what sources of comfort spring up on all sides! so honourable, so distinguish-

Digitized by Google

ed, so pure, so long a course of Christian rectitude and piety! India with its countless millions indebted to him for the establishment of its first missionaries, and for the supply of its ablest and most pious chaplains! Who began the work at Calcutta? Who bought the missionary church? Who received and supported Carey and Ward? Who sent out Buchanan? Who Thomason, Brown, Corrie, and the host of worthies who have preached a crucified Saviour to a lost world? Who swayed the council of India directors for thirty years at home? Who prepared the documents by which the Parliament was *compelled*, as it were, to provide some ecclesiastical establishment for the Indian Empire? and amidst all this, how humble, how retired, how spiritually-minded, how pure and sincere, how unobtrusive; and, that we might feel the void made by his loss the more, removed in a moment! He had been with his family in Kent on the Sunday and Monday; on the Wednesday he had attended a state dinner—on Wednesday night he had devoted every hour to important business. He was not in bed till eight o'clock on Thursday morning—the same day he was at the India House till six o'clock. After his usual nap, from nine o'clock till eleven, he sat at his papers till four o'clock; he felt cold in his back and extremities—rang for his butler—prepared for bed rather sooner than usual; from his private devotions he rose to retire to rest—a profuse perspiration came on—he sent for Dr. Pennington —spasms seemed coming on—camphor and ether relieved him, and he turned to compose himself to

Digitized by Google

sleep. Dr. Pennington approached the bed—he was no more! Like Enoch, he had "walked with God," and, like Enoch, "he was not, for God took him."

Believe me, your's very affectionately,

D. WILSON.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Tryphena Bathurst.

Barley Wood, 1823.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Through the great mercy of God, I am enabled once more to have the honour and pleasure of addressing your ladyship: I have been most wonderfully preserved through a winter which seems to have swept off all the old people in the land: I do not remember such a mortality. It is above a year and a half that I have been confined to my room; more than half that time to my bed. My sufferings have been great, but my mercies have been far greater. *Recovery* at my age is not to be expected, nor indeed, unless in submission to the divine will, is it to be desired. I am thankful to say that I am able to see my friends, who are so good as to visit me in my chamber. Indeed my kind physician complains that I see too much company. My greatest concern is, that I am burdened with such a heavy correspondence, that I cannot answer half the letters I receive. My amiable young friend,[1] whom I think I have spoken of before, still kindly stays with me, and generally answers

[1] Miss Frowd.

Digitized by Google

my letters of *friendship*, so that I really behave better to strangers, than to those I know and love. You would be surprised to see the masses of books, pamphlets, &c. I have from America. I do not naturally love Republicans, nor the coarse manners which belong to them; but these people appear really to be making such rapid advances, that they seem determined to run with us the race of glory. They seem to be improving in religion, morals, and literature. The episcopal church rises; they have now nine bishops, from some of whom I have letters. They treat me better than I deserve. They have sent me an edition of my own writings, elegantly bound. A drawing of my little habitation having found its way to New York, they have made a very good engraving of it, which their board of foreign missions is selling; and they are sanguine enough to expect that the sale will enable them to build a school in the distant island of Ceylon, for poor girls, which they intend doing me the honour of calling 'Barley Wood.' Have you seen their Bishop Dehon's Sermons, which are printed in London? They have considerable merit. We have not a religious or charitable institution in England, but they establish one of the same in three months, in all their great cities. I have been much interested, as everybody has, about the state of Ireland, but my mind has been chiefly occupied with the danger of some very dear and valuable friends, who are an ornament to their church. The Archbishop of Dublin has been in peril of his life, from the infuriated Papists. His admirable charge has so

Digitized by Google

enraged the Jesuits, that one of them, Friar Hayes, has published eight sermons, which he calls his octave; in one of which he has undertaken to prove the truth of transubstantiation from *reason*; in another from *Scripture*, &c. The whole is full of the most scurrilous, extravagant abuse of the good Archbishop. I was so anxious about this excellent friend, that they have contrived to furnish me with accounts how things went on. He is one of the greatest ornaments of the church, and the author of that admirable book on the *Atonement*. He is also a most agreeable and gentlemanly man. The fate of the Catholic claims in the House of Commons has rejoiced my heart, though I suppose it will increase the frenzy of this wild and turbulent people.

It would afford me great pleasure, to learn that Lady Susan's health was improved, and that yourself and the other ladies had escaped the perils of this Siberian winter. To all I desire to be most affectionately and respectfully remembered.

Believe me always, my dear Lady Tryphena,

Your much obliged and faithful,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. W. Pepys.

July 1, 1823.

My dear Friend,

I can no longer deny myself the gratification of writing a few lines to one of my very oldest and very best friends. My recovery to my present moderate health, is considered by my medical

Digitized by Google

friends as little short of a miracle. Through the great mercy of God I am enabled to resume my pursuits, and to receive my friends.. Indeed I see too *much* company, as talking much is injurious to me. My dear sister used to say, there were but two great evils in the world, sin and bile: now to say nothing of the former, the latter clings to me: the liver is now indeed my only seat of suffering. By the way, I pretend to have thrown light on a story of mythological antiquity, which has escaped all the classical commentators, and I give it you as an original discovery, *le voici*. Prometheus, it is said, was *chained* to Mount Caucasus, that is, he was *confined* to his bed. It's being called a *rock*, only means that it was a *hard* bed, not one of our luxurious beds of down. The vulture which fed upon his vitals, was nothing but a bad liver case. Now as the use of calomel was probably at that time not introduced into the Pharmacopœia of Caucasus, it is no wonder that though his liver was continually *devoured*, it was never *destroyed*. Hercules, who at last killed the vulture, was, I presume, some skilful physician, who had discovered some substitute for mercury, by which the bilious patient was, at the end of thirty years, delivered from his *hard bed*.

I never had so many cares and duties imposed upon me, as now in sickness and old age. I neglect my friends, while I have great intercourse with strangers. There is hardly a city in North America in which I have not a correspondent; if that be called correspondence, where there is little or no

Digitized by Google

reciprocity, for I am not able to answer two out of twenty of the letters I receive. Many of them are important; all relate to matters concerning religion, morals, or literature, in all which they appear to be fast improving. They have sent me a pretty drawing of my own habitation, engraved at New York, and with the profits arising from the sale, have built a school for poor girls at Ceylon, which they have called Barley Wood. I have lately had a small legacy left me by a dignitary in the Cathedral of Lincoln, whose name I had never heard, accompanied by a passage in his will more gratifying than his twenty guineas. With this bequest I have indulged myself by redeeming two little slaves in the Burman Empire, a country of nineteen millions, not so much of idolaters as atheists; an ingenious acute people, very argumentative, &c. as I learn from some friends there.

I am persuaded of the interest you have taken both from feeling and principle, in the struggle now so arduously carried on in the cause of negro slavery. Have you seen Mr. Wilberforce's last pamphlet? The zeal and ability exerted by him for thirty-six years are not one jot diminished.

Poor Greece! poor Scio! I think the only crusade I could forgive, would be, of all the students of both universities of *one year's* standing: who might raise a regiment, the best Grecians to be the chief officers; I allow only those in their *first* year, as they would afterwards be too wise to be guilty of such a glorious imprudence. Have you seen my friend Jowett's Christian Researches in the

Digitized by Google

Mediterranean? The author is much too elegant for a missionary. He is an accomplished scholar. He gives a correct account of the state of Christians, Jews, and Mahomedans in the Greek Islands. The former are fallen into such a state of poverty, that their bishops and archbishops do not subsist as well as our poorest curates. Their fallen grandeur reads us an instructive lesson.

I have been particularly interested in the *Ecclesiastical* concerns of Ireland, having two excellent friends placed in a most perilous state by their recent elevation, one to the See of Limerick, the other Dr. Magee, author of the admirable work on 'The Atonement,' to be Archbishop of Dublin. He is a great ornament to the church:—has all his suffragan bishops one day in every week to attend a board at his palace for the good of the church, and appoints two mornings in a week for curates and other inferior clergy to come to him with their information, complaints, &c. His life has been in danger from the fury of the Jesuits. He puts me in mind of good old Cyprian presiding at a Synod of three hundred bishops at Carthage. Alas! what is Carthage, and where her bishops now!

I hope your anxiety on Lady Pepys's account is removed, and that you may both be spared to enjoy that domestic comfort with which you seem to be so eminently blessed in the conduct and character of your children. I beg to be kindly and respectfully remembered to her and them. The good Bishop of Durham is in his ninetieth year, and still retains his fine hand-writing. In that article *you*

Digitized by Google

eclipse all the old and all the young. I value this talent so much, that I have established it as a maxim, that to speak so low that nobody can hear, and to write so ill that nobody can read, are among the minor immoralities. I have two delightful friends who are guilty of this latter fault to an undecipherable extent.

Adieu, my very dear and valued friend; I heartily commend you to the infinite mercies of our God and Saviour, for time and eternity.

Your faithful and attached,

H. More.

From Sir W. W. Pepys to Mrs. H. More.

Potterells, July, 1823.

My dear Friend,

Your most kind and interesting letter demands my warmest thanks, as it gave me the sincerest pleasure to see you write in such good spirits, and explain so well the story of poor old Prometheus, which before appeared to have no meaning; though I doubt not that if we were more *au fait* at the heathen mythology, we should find very salutary lessons conveyed under the cover of their fables. I hope you recollect the admirable comparison in the Rolliad, of the Speaker of the House of Commons, with Prometheus on his rock.

> Like sad Prometheus fasten'd to a rock,
> He sits with wistful eyes upon the clock.
> For though he hears, 'tis true,
> Pitt, Fox, and Burke, he hears Sir Joseph too.'

Digitized by Google

I sent your explanation of Prometheus to Sir Lucas, as it was so much in his profession, and he is much pleased with it. You will be glad to hear that we are all going on (thank God) as usual; myself enjoying, by his great goodness, uncommon health and spirits for eighty-three.

If your American correspondence does not oppress you too much, it must be highly gratifying to you to find that your sphere of doing good has been extended over the new world. I say nothing of your fame, because I know you are actuated by much higher motives; but I have often thought, when I have been reading the limits which Cicero sets on all human celebrity, (which he observes cannot by any possibility extend beyond the pillars of Hercules,) how little he dreamed that his name would be as well known on the Mississippi as on the Tiber; nor did you, I apprehend, when you were recommending the most important truths by the united powers of argument and wit, ever think that the good effects of them would be diffused over America, as well as Europe, and indeed wherever the English language shall be read; which I doubt not, it will be, in time, over India and New Holland; so that your ambition of doing good may continue to enlarge with your success. You will have 'ample scope and verge enough, the characters of heaven to trace.' Fame, which by the generality of mankind, is considered as a sufficiently laudable *motive*, has been to you only a *consequence*, and I perceive that you begin already to pant for more room, so that we are obliged to take in the Burman Empire to pre-

Digitized by Google

vent your being suffocated. An excellent friend of mine used to say, when he heard any one talk of extending his beneficence to China and Japan, that he felt very much disposed to inquire after his wife and children: but as you have never neglected, but on the contrary, have done so much for, whatever was within your reach, you are well entitled to extend your beneficence wherever you can make it felt. You do me but justice, (let Madame de Sevigné laugh at the repetition of that phrase as much as she pleases) when you suppose me deeply interested in the cause of the Greeks; though I have, within this day or two, taken up a book which I fear will cool my ardour in their cause. It is Gell's Tour through the Morea, for he not only says, (and I believe truly enough,) that not one out of twenty of the present inhabitants are descended from the ancient Greeks, but that the character of the present Greek population is considerably worse than that of the Turks. Be that as it may, I have derived so much pleasure, and have felt my mind so much expanded by some of their writers in that most powerful and delightful of all languages, that were it only *pour l'amour de Grec*, I could not withhold my mite, from their assistance. A very lively and intelligent man said to me, 'if I hear that any person is fond of Greek, without knowing any more about him, I am prepossessed in his favour;' nor did he seem to intend the observation as any compliment to me, but as resulting from the general impression in favour of literary men, in which I very much agree with him, with the addition of

Digitized by Google

literary *women*; an opinion which I have lately avowed, in some verses addressed to a friend on his wedding day, which Mrs. Joanna Baillie has published with other poems for a charitable purpose, and for which I have received the thanks of some literary ladies. I am glad to hear that your young friend is still with you, and from the account you give of her, if I were but an odd fifty years younger, I should be very much disposed to fall in love with her, and to take a journey to Barley Wood, under the pretence of profiting by *your* conversation, but in reality to get a sight of *her*: as it is, however, you are both safe enough from any such quixotic intrusion, for though I do not feel many effects of old age, the disinclination to remove from home, is, I fear, a very decisive symptom. Barley Wood in Ceylon! how this will puzzle some future commentator on your works, who will find some obscure tradition, that for some reason or other, most probably, he will say, for the laudable purpose of disseminating religion, our author took this long voyage, and in commemoration of it, gave the name of her own residence to the school, which it is evident she established in that island.

You are no doubt much interested in the issue of Captain Parry's voyage of discovery. Captain Sabine, who accompanied him on his former voyage, told me that Parry requested no one to think about him till the autumn of 1824, but that he should expect to find a ship ready to receive him about that time near Behring's Straits. Upon my expressing some

Digitized by Google

wonder, what could possibly detain him so long; Captain Sabine observed, that the projection of a single cape or promontory farther into the Northern Ocean than he expected, might delay him for a year. A physician told me, that if, in the former voyage, Captain Parry had not possessed uncommon powers of keeping the sailors constantly *amused*, they would have been sick with the scurvy. You surprise me by saying that your good Archbishop has been in danger from the Jesuits; but I believe they are concealed in places where you would think them less likely to be found than in Ireland. A gentleman who had been warned by a perfect *stranger*, to escape from the inquisition at Lisbon, saw many years afterwards, a man cutting up a sheep as a butcher at Norwich, whom he recognized as the friend to whom he had been indebted for his safety. He naturally asked in what way he could best return the obligation? to which question the answer was, 'by never taking the least notice that you ever saw me before.'

The kind and solemn farewell with which you conclude your letter to one who is nearer eighty-four than eighty-three, and who does not want Horace to remind him—

'Omnem crede Diem tibi diluxisse supremum.'

affected me much. God be with you, my dear friend, in life or in death.

Your's most affectionately,

W. W. Pepys.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to a Friend.

Barley Wood, Nov. 1823.

What is become of you? Where are you? What are you doing? It would indeed be 'germane to the matter' to put these interrogatories to *me*, as I have long been in your debt for a delightful letter. But there is a reason for your not asking *where* I am, as I am sure to be found in the bow-window in my bed-chamber. It is now about two years since I have been down stairs, and, I think, four years and a quarter since I have been in any house besides my own. It is not at present that my locomotive powers are not equal to travel down stairs, but that this unmannerly summer made my good Dr. Carrick order me to run no risk. I have, however, a pleasant prison, and am not anxious for a gaol delivery. My health is much better, through the great mercy of God, than there was any human probability would ever be the case; but with frequent salutary interruptions of bad nights. These are necessary to remind me that this is not my rest. I see a good deal of company in the middle of the day. But the *post* occupies and fatigues me much more than my guests. If you saw my table on most days, you would think, that if I were not a minister of state, I was become at least a clerk in a public office. These petty businesses often prevent my writing to those dear friends with whom it would be my delight to have more intercourse. I find, however, a good deal of

Digitized by Google

time to work with my *hands*, while Miss Frowd reads for the entertainment of my *head*. The learned labours of my knitting-needle are now accumulating to be sent to America to the Missionary Society, who sell them there, and send the produce to the Barley Wood school at Ceylon. So you see I am still good for something.

The Protestant church which is being erected over the very ashes of that arch-fiend Voltaire, is too wonderful not to be just hinted at. That he whose constant cry it was, '*Il faut écraser l'Infame*,' should have the gospel of the Saviour he vilified; and whose very name he swore he would exterminate, preached over his grave, is an instance of the antidote following the poison, the most striking! How I honour the Baron de Stäel. Had his unhappy mother employed *her* talents (unrivalled by any woman certainly) in the way her son has employed his, she would have been as much the object of love and esteem, as she always must be of admiration.

Adieu, my dear M——. That God may bless you with all the best of his blessings, prays

Your very affectionate

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

December 26, 1823.

My dear Friend,

I hear from others a favourable report of your health. I thank God for this comfort amidst the

Digitized by Google

sad reports I receive of other dear friends. The ranks of the righteous seem to be thinning sadly. That dear Mr. G—— should be taken in the midst of his usefulness, and I spared in the midst of my uselessness, is among the daily proofs that we receive, that God's way are not as our ways. Preparation is necessary for me, and therefore *time* is given me; yet my time is not so much my own as you would imagine. I have had too many cares and interruptions, and too little leisure and repose, for age and sickness; too much of Martha—too little of Mary. Yet Bishop Hall says, by way of comfort, 'It was Martha who went to meet Jesus.'

Of all the interesting events which almost every day now produces, I think not one has excited my feelings so much as the raising a church at Ferney. That the execrable being, who declared he would never rest till he had exterminated the very name of Jesus, should have the gospel preached over his tomb, and the publication of that gospel poured from that press which had so long been made the vehicle of his abominations, is indeed 'the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' I cannot help thinking that independently of religious feelings, it is more worth-while as a matter of mere curiosity to an inquisitive mind, to be alive now, than at almost any period that history presents to us. I need not enumerate to you the astonishing and prosperous institutions of piety and charity, nor the successful projects of philosophy, mechanics, &c.

But how I run on! I pray God to give you and

Digitized by Google

all your dear family, the blessings of the present gracious and hallowed season.

Pray sometimes for one who stands as much in need of your petitions, as any for whom they can be offered.

Your very affectionate,

H. More.

From Sir W. W. Pepys to Mrs. H. More.

Potterells, Dec. 1823.

My dear Friend,

In looking over your last letter, (for your letters remind one of *Decies repetita placebit*,) I observe that you inquired after Mrs. Joanna Baillie's publication of poems last winter, for a charitable purpose. As I was a subscriber, I have desired that a copy of them may be sent from my empty house in London. They answered the good purpose for which they were collected, as the subscription was very large; which reminds one of an answer which some one made to a minister, who asked whether he could do any thing for him—'Nothing,' replied he, 'unless you could make me a *Scotchman*.' I well remember Lord Elibank maintaining a very good argument, to show our inconsistency in being angry with the Scots for their partiality for their country, when we applaud the Greeks and Romans, who carried that partiality to as great a length. Apropos, I cannot help telling you of an instance of it which was acknowledged in my presence. Two English

Digitized by Google

gentlemen and a Scotch one took a ride together in the summer to Tunbridge Wells, and on their arrival, the two English having been shaved by a barber of that place, asked their companion if he would not also be shaved; which he had no sooner declined, than the waiter whispered him, 'Sir, I have found a *Scotch* barber,' to which the other replied, 'Oh! very good, let him walk in.'

In answer to your question about Irving, I have read a few of his orations, and the third, if I mistake not, pleased me very much; but I could not proceed—the very bad taste, and those '*Ambitiosa Ornamenta*,' which Horace so justly reprobates, disgusted me exceedingly. The first charm of a preacher, in my opinion, is to possess his congregation with a conviction that he is thoroughly *in earnest*. The subjects in the pulpit are of too momentous a concern, to be made the materials of oratorical flourishes; and whatever tends to shew the preacher more intent upon displaying his own abilities than persuading or convincing his hearers, is not only bad taste, but a pitiful aberration from what ought to be his sole object.

Your caricature of two Romish penitents, one at each ear of the priest, is very humorous, and would illustrate the etymology of that word *bother*, that is, *both ear*, of which the Irish make so much use. How can we be surprised at the prevalence of absolute infidelity in catholic countries, when we know how rapid the transition is from superstition and mummery to no religion at all. When I was in France in 1774, they considered Hume as a good

Digitized by Google

sort of a man, '*Hors ses prejugés*,' as he was not an atheist.

You will be glad to hear that I continue, thank God, as well as ever. Pray let me hear the same good account of you. It seems quite presumptuous, at near eighty-four, to talk of what we intend to do next month; but if it please God, we hope to return to town for the winter, on the 14th of January, which is our usual day; so that seven months in the country, and five in London, give us as much variety as we wish! though I am sometimes tempted to invert Lord Chesterfield's eulogium of London, by saying of the country, 'that it is the best place in winter, and in summer there is no living out of it.'

We have been pleased with some of Dr. Aikin's Essays upon subjects of criticism, as his style and that of his daughter seem to be very good; but the *politics* of most dissenters, 'No king, no bishops,' &c. do not accord with mine; as I find myself under the present form of government quite at liberty enough to do every thing but mischief. I will now detain you no longer than to repeat what I trust I shall do with my latest breath, that I am,

My dear and admirable friend, your's ever,

W. W. PEPYS.

From the same to the same.

Potterells, Oct. 1824.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have directed Messrs. Child to pay to Sir Peter Pole and Co. £100. to be placed to your account,

Digitized by Google

as I could not recollect the name of your banker at Bristol; this, if I remember right, was the way in which it was done last year.

I hope to hear that you continue well, and know you will be pleased to hear that I never was better; which however I pray may not make me forget how near I must necessarily be to my latter end! Whenever it comes, I hope to be found deeply sensible of the very great blessings which have been bestowed upon me through so long a life, and sincerely penitent for not having made a better use of them. I am here surrounded by all that can make old age comfortable and happy; dutiful and affectionate children, with a number of pleasing and promising grand-children, who, I trust, will reward their mother for all her kindness and attention to me. You know I believe, that my two younger sons are both happily married. My eldest son and my three daughters are with me, and I am every day most truly thankful that my age, though now far beyond fourscore years, is so far from being nothing but labour and sorrow, that it is full as happy as any former period of it, and indeed much happier than when my hopes and fears as to this life were all afloat. What says your young friend to all this? Does she think that she will be happier at eighty-four than she is now? I rather think that she will make the same answer that a young lady made to one who quoted from St. Paul, "that they who married did well, but they who did not marry did better"—'that she did not want to do better than well.' She is, however, at this time, laying up a

Digitized by Google

great treasure of comfort for her old age; as no occurrence in her youth will give her more pleasure than the recollection of that kind assiduity and attention which you say has contributed so essentially to your comfort, and by which she has made a conquest which few ladies can boast of, over one who fancied himself secure, not only by distance, but old age.

We have been reading, in an evening, the 'Life of Goëthe,' in which much of the present German notions are disclosed; and it seems to me, that imagination has, till lately, been such a scarce commodity with these people, that now they have got it, they don't know what to do with it: however, I am rejoiced to find that as great honours are paid to Shakspeare as in his own country; and one can see from what Schiller has said of him, that in Germany he is perfectly well understood, which in France he never can be. Voltaire, you know, says of Hamlet and the Grave-digger, 'Que ces Messieurs là se mettent à considérer les têtes.' I hope you have not forgotten that best of all Mrs. Montagu's *bon-mots*, 'Ce fumier qui a fertilizé une terre ingrate.' I don't know whether we ever talked of that most extraordinary instance of indifference to posthumous fame which Shakspeare manifested in the latter years of his life; when he seems to have retired to his native place without the smallest concern as to what might become of his works; and, as far as I can learn, if the prompter's book had been burned, we should have had no traces of Shakspeare; to which, I presume, Pope alludes in his well-known lines—

Digitized by Google

'Shakspeare, whom you and every play-house bill
Style the divine, the matchless, what you will;
For gain, not glory wing'd his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.'

I hope you are as sincere a friend to the cause of the Greeks as I am. What a curious but afflicting sight it is to behold a nation so gallantly struggling to emancipate itself from the worst of slavery,—that nation the very nursery of all our learning and science; and yet from untoward circumstances, not one national arm in all Europe stretched out for their assistance. A few years ago, if this had been predicted, it would not have been believed.

Farewell, my dear friend, and let me repeat my desire that you would sometimes remember me in your prayers, as one who admires your virtues and piety, even more than your talents, which is '*beaucoup dire*,' and one who cannot accuse himself of any lukewarmness in the friendship with which he is, always,

Your's affectionately,

W. W. PEPYS.

From Mr. James Montgomery[1] to Mrs. H. More.

Sheffield, 1824,

DEAR MADAM,

Your letter inclosing eleven pounds—from Mr. S——, £5; Mrs. W— —, £5; and Mr. P—— £1.

[1] Author of 'The World before the Flood,' &c.

Digitized by Google

came to hand this morning; and I have paid the amount to the treasurer of the fund for the use of Mrs. C—— and her children. Accept for them the expression of my sincerest thanks. You have done well, and you have influenced others to do likewise, beyond what you yourself may be aware of. I ventured to publish an extract from your former letter in the Iris! and though I cannot specifically state the effect, I am as confident that there was a blessing on it, as if I could enumerate all the good feelings, good purposes, and good works, it produced among benevolent and Christian readers. Though it was a bold liberty to take with the very first communication that I ever received from your hands, there was no time to ask permission, and I chose rather to hazard the responsibility of giving it seasonable publicity, than the responsibility of withholding it a day longer than I could help. I considered—and I considered rightly, that some persons have that to give which is more valuable than gold or silver; and as you are of this privileged number, I could not in my conscience deny to the widow and the fatherless, the authority and influence of your name and your example, not only in contributing liberally to their relief, but in sanctioning and recommending those excellent forms of prayer which the departed servant of the Lord has left, not merely as a legacy, which may produce a small pecuniary advantage to his family, but as an inheritance to the church itself, to be enjoyed by all its members—and here I mean the church of Christ generally,—who are inclined to avail themselves of

Digitized by Google

such a spiritual provision of "daily bread" for their families. Forgive what may seem praise in this statement, in reference to yourself; but I could not explain the motive for that which I had done without your leave, and avoid saying that which, however agreeable to myself to avow, you may feel humbled, and yet, I trust, gratified to hear, because there is truth and honesty in the fact, and in the feeling with which I write it. The subscription for this family has indeed gone on gloriously; I believe it amounts to about £4000. And surely this is a token for good, that God is indeed blessing the faithful testimony of the gospel of his Son, by whomsoever preached,—when so many people of all classes, from the archbishop and the peer down to very humble individuals, are made willing to contribute so freely to the comfort of those who are rendered dear to the living, because they belonged to one who had laboured in the Lord, and was "esteemed very highly for his work's sake;" and who having died in the Lord also, his works not only followed him to the judgment-seat, but are thus made to follow him in blessings to those who give, and those who receive, this unexampled bounty. I cannot imagine the possibility of such a sum of money being poured in from all quarters, all ranks, all kinds (if I may use the word) of people, for the family of any minister of another character than the late Mr. C——. As much money might be raised, perhaps, in many instances, but then it would be among rich and powerful connections, and within a certain locality or sphere of personal influence. His

Digitized by Google

town's people (not of his church) have generously made one cause with those more directly attached to him; but a very large proportion of the sums contributed has come from distant parts of the kingdom—from strangers who knew him only by his writings and his character, or who had occasionally witnessed his zeal, and faith, and fervour on Missionary and Bible Society occasions.

I am crowding my paper, and setting you a difficult task to read my scrawl, but my hand has run faster and longer than I thought it could do when I took up the pen, being exceedingly unwell; though like the breathing of a vein in some complaints, I feel better for the exercise, which is more than I have had courage to take in the same way for several days. Mrs. C—— was exceedingly grateful for your former kindnesses, and this additional proof of your remembrance will cheer her heart. She droops much, but who would not, circumstanced as she is? He was no ordinary man.

Accept my best thanks for your too good opinion of me: would that I merited it!

I am, very truly and respectfully,

Your obliged friend,

J. MONTGOMERY.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Tryphena Bathurst.

1824.

MY DEAR LADY TRYPHENA,

I might with truth and propriety say, my dear *ladies*, for I remember each and all with undiminished respect and affection. It will rejoice my

Digitized by Google

heart to hear a good report of the health of all: especially of my dear Lady Tryphena's eyes. What a consolation that she has in her own family, able and kind readers. I take the liberty of again troubling you with poor Messenger's little annual remittance. I hope the poor soul's family calamities are diminished; as to myself, through the great mercy of my heavenly Father, I have been wonderfully carried through the vicissitudes of the weather during the last winter; and though I do not quit my apartment, I see a great deal of company; too much, my kind physician says,—but most of them are among the excellent of the earth, and some come from far. I only see them in a morning; and manage very well when they are all of one party; but when I am obliged to split my attentions, it is a little fatiguing; for instance, I had the other day three ladies from the highlands of Scotland, three gentlemen from the land's end in Cornwall, and one from Dublin. They had never seen each other, nor had I ever seen any but the latter.

I envy those who are in London this week, which I call the saints' festival; so many distinguished scholars and Christians will speak at the different religious and charitable public meetings, I hope, with profit. As to my insignificant self, I can find sufficient employment, which, if not splendid, is not quite useless. At Bristol, Clifton, and Bath, they have an annual Bazaar for the different charitable societies, which, by means of contributions of ladies' different works, produces a great deal of money. You will see, that in my old age I am brought so

Digitized by Google

low as to write halfpenny papers: I enclose you a specimen. Every year I write some such trifle as the enclosed. The ladies who conduct the bazaars in the different places, get these paltry papers printed, sometimes on coloured papers, and by selling them for a shilling, twenty pounds has been collected in the year. I spend all my leisure in knitting garters and muffatees a little decorated: these, by the lady customers giving five times more than they are worth, bring in the year no contemptible sum.

I have lost so many of my contemporaries within the last year, particularly in the higher classes, that I am ready to ask with Dr. Johnson, where is the world into which I was born?—*they* taken, *I* spared—*they* of great importance in society, *I* of little or none; but by thus extending my life, God has been pleased to give me a longer space for repentance and preparation. May it not have been given in vain.

Adieu, my dear ladies, I heartily pray God to bless you in time and eternity.

Your faithful and obedient,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

MRS. H. MORE seemed to view her wonderful rescue from the opening grave as an imperative call upon her to improve with increased vigilance every passing hour to the temporal or spiritual benefit of her fellow-creatures. She considered that her life was thus unexpectedly given back to her for this purpose; and every day witnessed some proof of her benevolence. It was no uncommon thing for those who solicited her contributions to find that she had been beforehand with them, and that before their charity had set out, hers had reached its object; while the manner which accompanied her kindnesses gave completeness to their Christian character. She still continued as much alive as ever to the pleasures of intellectual and instructive intercourse with her friends; and it was admitted on all hands that her conversation had lost none of its accustomed sprightliness. A friend who spent some weeks with her towards the end of this year, recollects some detached parts of her conversation, which are here thrown together. She remembered that when Johnson was intending

Digitized by Google

to write the life of Akenside, he asked her, as a friend of Sir James Stonehouse, his contemporary at Northampton, if she could supply him with any information concerning him; upon which she made an effort to recollect some sayings she had heard reported of his, when he interrupted her with impatience—'Incident, child! incident is what a biographer wants—did he break his leg?'

At another time she mentioned that her friend Mrs. K—— and a little worthy knot of her neighbours, had with the purest intentions, entered into an engagement, by which they bound themselves to do some good work every day; and that she had advised them to dissolve the contract; because if they performed it, they might be too triumphant, and if they failed, too desponding; but still to work on in the spirit, though not in the letter of the obligation.

She remarked one day that if we resolved things into their first principles, how few and simple they would be discovered to be. The vehicle of all knowledge was formed of the combinations of twenty-four letters—all calculations were generated from nine figures—and all the infinite variations of sound in music from eight notes.

In speaking of Soame Jenyns, she gave an anecdote descriptive of his extraordinary easiness of temper, and careless good humour. A friend who called upon him one morning was pressed by him to take a slice of cold meat, but the servant on being summoned, informed his master that there was not a morsel in his larder. When he had left the room,

Digitized by Google

Mr. Jenyns turned to his friend, and said, 'Now we had a large round of beef dressed yesterday; this is therefore rather unaccountable. But I expect these things; and that I may not be subject to lose my temper, I set down £300. a year to losses by lying and cheating, and thus I maintain my composure.'

She told us one day of a bon mot of Burke's, who expressing to her his dislike to closed bookcases in an apartment, exclaimed, 'I don't like this *Locke* on the human understanding.'

She declared her strong objection to the application of consecrated words and phrases to familiar things; such as the "great unknown"—Resurrection men;—the Ascension of a balloon;—even the Redemption of the Land Tax; the salvation of the country; the christening of a ship, &c. She said she often tried to pass a day without once saying in reference to earthly things, 'I wish.'

We have thus caught and imprisoned some fugitive vapours of her fine mind, as they rose and played in the corruscations of her returning health and spirits, with the freshness of the morning of her existence, when her elastic thoughts first woke upon the scene of her future eminence, and the world's realities and excitements.

Before we leave these little reminiscences, with which, after her frequent periodical illnesses, the symptoms of her convalescence were generally attended, to the delight of those who sat with her in her chamber, we will give the reader a passage or two, which though they chronologically belong to an earlier part of her life, are not out of moral

Digitized by Google

order among the general aggregate of sayings and things which bring out the character and expression of her mind,—of that mind which though voluble and various, and taking all the tints and shades of passing events as they moved in quick succession before her, was always occupied with the single sober purpose of doing good, in the large and little concerns of society, with a persevering sameness of thought and action.

Mr. Jay of Bath, whose chapel she frequented under the circumstances which she explained to her diocesan in the letter which has been already produced, and of whom Mrs. More's high opinion is well known, has favoured me with the following particulars:

One day in a dinner party at Mrs. More's house in Bath, he was lamenting the ingratitude Mrs. M. had recently met with from a person he had recommended to her beneficence,—upon which he received a look from her which silenced him; and after dinner drawing him into a corner of the room, she said, 'You know we must never speak of such things as these before people; for they are always too backward to do good; and they are sure to dwell on such facts to justify their illiberality.' She finely added, 'It is well for us sometimes to meet with such instances of ingratitude, to shew us our motives; for if they have been right we shall not repent of our doing, though we lament the depravity of a fellow-creature. In these instances also, as in a glass, we may see little emblems of ourselves; for what, after all, is the ingratitude of any

Digitized by Google

one towards us, compared with our ingratitude towards our infinite benefactor.'

Mr. Jay said this was but in character with *all* she *said* and *did* through a long and favoured intimacy with her after he came to Bath; adding,—'Great as her fame has been, I never considered it equal to her merit. Such a fine and complete combination of talent and goodness, and of zeal and discretion, I never witnessed. All her resources, influences, and opportunities were simply and invariably made to subserve one purpose, in which she lived not to herself, but to Him who died for us and rose again.'

There was nothing, he said, he admired more than her *conversation*, and not only its eloquence, but its judiciousness, its selectness, its appropriateness. Whatever was the party or the topic, "upon her tongue was the law of kindness." There was never a word to offend, or wound, or grieve, but always something to instruct and improve; "her speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt, and ministered to the edifying of the hearers."

'You could not,' he said, 'touch her without finding her electrical wit, genius, and godliness. Her very praise was moral. If she praised a sermon, it was not a sermon that might have a little air of originality, but one that commended itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. She often remarked, that preaching was an instrument, and the best instrument was that which did its work best.'

Mr. Jay remarked that when forty-four years ago

Digitized by Google

he first saw her in his congregation, she tried him more than any person he had preached before; but when he had become acquainted with her, and was secure of her friendship, he was pleased to see her present. He soon made her a confidante; entreating her to point out any thing she deemed exceptionable, or capable of improvement in one so young and inexperienced; and he acknowledged with gratitude many valuable hints derived from her judgment in the discharge of his ministry.

He admired the moderation of her doctrinal sentiments, and her decided dislike of the jargon of the schools, and whatever men had rendered metaphysical and exclusive in the gospel of the God of all grace. She was, however, he said, fond of reading the works of many of the old divines, and even those of the puritans and nonconformists, remarking with her inimitable smartness, 'that she found nothing more good than the lean of their fat.'

In the month of July in this year (1824), the Wrington Bible Meeting took place, of which she was still the strength and cement, although unable to be personally present. The apostolic Bishop of Ohio, (Bishop Chase,) was brought to the meeting by Sir T. Acland, and was one of seventeen who dined at Barley Wood, when the business was over. After dinner, the whole party assembled in Mrs. More's apartment, when an animated and interesting conversation was carried on during several hours, in which Mrs. More, now in her 79th year, bore a conspicuous part, and the good American bishop, who pronounced the parting prayer, brought away

Digitized by Google

strong impressions of the conservative power of vital faith, in keeping the heart warm and the head clear, under the weight of years, and amidst all the aggravations of infirmity and pain.

The intermission was short. In about a month after the festival of the Wrington Bible Meeting which has just been recorded, Mrs. More was again laid upon the bed of sickness. She was to be subjected to a fresh trial; and again her Christian part was to maintain its accustomed conflict with irritating pains and loathsome remedies; and on this, as on other like occasions, the perfect composure of mind, into which she had long settled, and her habitual resignation to the divine will, were great auxiliaries to the skill and care of her physician.

She recovered from this severe attack, but not till she had made her sick chamber again the scene of an edifying patience, and a school of spiritual instruction. She said she wished to bear her dying testimony to the goodness of God, that her blessings had always been much greater than her sufferings; and added, as one proof of the mercy shown her, even in her privations, that for many years she had lost her taste and smell, which had been taken from her by a violent attack of fever, and had once thought it an affliction, but having since that period been almost perpetually constrained to feed on drugs, she now felt her loss transmuted into gain, as her medicines were disarmed of their power of tormenting her. Somebody speaking of a very fine house they had recently seen, she said, 'Do they ever suspect that so mean a thing as death can enter amongst all

Digitized by Google

that finery? take physic, pomp;' and then raising herself in her bed with surprising energy, though obliged to pause for breath between the words, she repeated,

> 'Oh, insolence of wealth, with all thy store,
> How durst thou let one worthy man be poor?'

On another occasion she thus broke forth, 'What sinful, vile, miserable bodies we have, and yet we can be proud, and dainty, and fastidious.' When she heard the bell toll for the funeral of her late medical attendant, she exclaimed, 'Happy Mr. James, he has escaped before me! Pray sing the Funeral Hymn at family prayer this evening.' Upon those about her answering that nobody had spirits to raise their voice in song, she said, 'Why not? it will raise your hearts in love.' In a moment of particular suffering, she exclaimed, 'Can my friends wish such a state as mine to be prolonged? death would be the greatest mercy—but it is all best. I am not yet fit, I want a few more stripes, or I should not have them, for He does nothing without design.' She once or twice remarked, with grateful emotion, upon the affecting beauty of that expression, "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes;" not only that they should be wiped away, but that God himself should wipe them away.

Yet once more was it the good pleasure of Providence, to raise up this eminent Christian to bear a little longer her testimony to the power of faith, and the Spirit's operation on the heart and understanding. Before she was able to quit her bed, she

Digitized by Google

had vigour to project, and partly to execute a plan to which she had been often urged when in tolerable health,—that of extracting from all her later works, each of which contained a chapter on prayer, her thoughts upon that all-important subject. These passages, when brought together with some additions, composed a little volume, to which she prefixed a few pious and touching sentences, by way of preface, and bequeathed it to her friends, not expecting herself to witness its publication. No sooner was this little book advertised, than the whole edition was bespoken, and another was in preparation before she herself had received a single copy of the first. It reached a third edition within three months of its first appearance.

From Sir W. W. Pepys to Mrs. H. More.

Potterells, January 7, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have just finished your 'Spirit of Prayer,' for which I give you my sincerest thanks. I have told my family, what, if said only to you, might savour too much of compliment,—that I do not recollect to have ever risen from a book which gave me greater *pleasure;* I said actual *pleasure,*—not merely instruction or useful exhortaion, but positive delight. There is such an animated spirit of piety running through the whole of it, that not to have greatly relished it, would have im-

Digitized by Google

peached one's taste, even more than one's principles. Mrs. Montagu and I used always to agree that you had more wit in your serious writings than other people had when they meant to be professedly witty; and I used to tell her that whenever I should see you I should plague you by complimenting you upon the wit of your writings, and not upon the good which I thought they would do: as to this last treatise, I hope to have it always upon my table, and to read it over and over again as long as I shall wish to cherish the spirit of piety; which I pray to God may be as long as I live.

Mrs. H. Bowdler writes me word that she saw you lately, and that you were still in your chamber. She says, 'I left her with feelings of respect and admiration which I cannot describe. I never saw her more agreeable or more animated than on this last visit.' Though you have long since been raised above the praise of us poor mortals, yet if any such can give you pleasure, it must be when it comes from such a person as Mrs. Bowdler.

We are just now reading in an evening a memoir of Mr. John Bowdler, her brother, written by his son, which shews him to have been worthy of that excellent family to which he belonged. I have long known and highly respected Thomas Bowdler, but of John I knew nothing, except an admirable saying, which I remember was attributed to him, some years ago, when the fashion was to lament over the state of this unhappy country.—'If,' said he, 'a man were to go from the northern to the southern extremity of this island, with his eyes shut and

Digitized by Google

his ears open, he would think that this country was sinking into an abyss of destruction; but if he were to return with his ears shut and his eyes open, he would be satisfied that we had the greatest reason to be thankful for our prosperity.' As we have not finished the Memoir, I can only hope that this observation has been preserved in it. What would he have said had he lived to see the *present* state of this country?

We hope to return to our winter quarters on Friday next, the 14th, and, (blessed be God) in the same state of health and spirits as though Tuesday next would not complete my 85th year. I will not fill my paper with any effusions of that gratitude which the most obdurate heart must feel for such unmerited kindness. I wonder whether I shall ever see that young lady[1] in whose favour you have so highly prepossessed me, by the account which you gave of her kindness and attentions to you. If that false sentiment be so applauded,

'My friend must hate the man who injures me.'

surely it is equally fair, that your friend should like, (I suppose I must not say *love*) the young lady, who has shewn such attachment to you; pray remember me to her, and tell her, that I think she has much more reason to value herself upon the conquest of an old man who has never seen her, than of any young man who has.

[1] Miss Frowd, to whose disinterested and devoted friendship, Mrs. More owed much of the comfort of her latter years.

Digitized by Google

We have been of late very much pleased in an evening, by the Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke, the traveller, which we thought an acquisition, as it is so difficult to find any book that will suit equally the taste and ages of a whole family circle. For my part, when I am alone, I feel that I have so little concern with this world, and so much with the next, that I am apt to reproach myself if I bestow much time on any book that has not some *tendency* at least, to prepare me for the awful change I must expect so soon to undergo. Dr. Doddridge, on the words "wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" recommends that answer to those who lose their time on the curiosities of literature, instead of being about their heavenly "father's business;" and quotes the last words of a great scholar '*Heu! vitam perdidi operose nihil agendo.*' This, my dear friend, will never rise up, I trust, as a just accusation against you, who have employed those brilliant talents which God has bestowed on you, so much to his glory and the good of your fellow-creatures. I sometimes compare you with those who have attained the summit of earthly renown, and ask myself which I had rather be at this period of my life? I need not tell you the answer, which would be attended with still more self-reproach than it is, did I not feel that the mediocrity of my own talents exempts me, in some degree, from much of that responsibility which is attached to such as your's. But this is too fearful a subject to dwell upon, for we have all so much to be forgiven that it is idle to compare the quantities.

Digitized by Google

May God in his mercy receive us both, through our only Mediator and Advocate.

Adieu, my most valued friend, I can never say how much I am,

Your's affectionately,
W. W. PEPYS.

From Mr. Gray to Mrs. H. More.

York, January 21, 1825.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Though I fear that even the receipt of a letter may now be fatiguing, I cannot forbear acknowledging the continuance of your kind attention in transmitting, by your bookseller, the small volume on 'the Spirit of Prayer.' I have perused it with interest; and, if not also with profit, the fault is all my own. It was well, instead of engaging at this late crisis in anything savouring of novelty or originality, to select and place in the public hand that part of the spiritual armour which is so pre-eminently necessary to bring into use and efficacy all the other parts of the sacred panoply which you have been labouring so long to recommend for the purposes of the Christian warfare. May the divine blessing rest upon the whole, and render it prosperous in accomplishing the objects for which it is intended!

What shall I say to you further, my dear Madam, in this probably, my last communication? I congratulate you, that now is your salvation so much nearer than when you believed; that your own

Digitized by Google

warfare, your toils and your labours, are so fast approaching to a close, and you about to enter into that rest which remaineth for the people of God. I might safely speak also of heavenly rewards, and of that glory and honour and immortality reserved for those who patiently continue in well-doing; not for their own sakes, but for that of their Saviour: but I know you would not like me to dwell upon these in your case, whatever I may think and hope: yet, surely, that peace and rest which I first spoke of, and which constitutes the hope and the prospect of the very lowest order of Christians, is in itself a delightful privilege. To have done for ever with *sin*, as well as suffering—with Satan and his temptations —with that world, which, notwithstanding all its gratifications and its indulgences, is still a "wicked," and an ensnaring world; even these negative blessings are more than a counterbalance for all the privations and trials of the Christian life: but what are these, compared with the positive felicity of "awaking after the divine likeness;" of worshipping before the throne of God and the Lamb; of being for ever with the Lord Jesus, to behold his glory, and to witness his triumphs!

And may I not also congratulate you, my dear Madam, and rejoice with you, on having lived to see what we now see *upon earth*, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, to a degree, which I dare say we neither of us at our entrance on the Christian life expected to witness, whatever might have been the language of our prayers, or the complexion of our wishes. Let us take the comfort of it. We

Digitized by Google

may be farther cheered by the persuasion, that, whether present with or absent from the body, we shall be favoured with a consciousness of the spreading of the Redeemer's kingdom in this lower world; and though he, who is as yet the Prince of it, seems to be preparing a resistance which may for a time seem to succeed, yet we shall in the end rejoice in the overthrow of him and his dominion.

I have little intelligence of a local description which can be interesting to you. Perhaps you have heard of the death of Miss Buchanan, the unmarried daughter of the late excellent Dr. Buchanan, which was a truly happy one. She resided with Mrs. Thompson, the mother of the second Mrs. Buchanan, at Shelton, near this place: a lady rich in good works and Christian graces, who had educated her and her sister from the time of the death of their mother-in-law, and was rewarded by finding in Miss B. (who lived to the age, I think, of 26,) an intelligent and pious friend. The young lady, though sincere in religion, walked heavily, and enjoyed few of its comforts; but last summer, while visiting her younger sister, who is married near Glasgow, she fell in with Dr. Chalmers, who entered into her case, and placed so strongly before her eyes the comforts of the Gospel, that she came back rejoicing. This peace and hope appeared yet more abundant at the close of her illness, which was a short one, (though attended with intervals of delirium,) so that she had a strong foretaste of heaven before she entered it. I have heard of late of two or three other instances of these divine mani-

Digitized by Google

festations in the case of dying saints. They are rare, and generally vouchsafed to younger Christians. I suppose you will think with me, that although they ought to be gratefully welcomed, they should not be eagerly coveted. If, as in the case of Mr. Scott and Mr. Richardson, faith and patience are exercised, when the flesh and the heart fail, God is more glorified, and the believer more evidently distinguished as such, than by his departing in triumph.

I am at this moment reminded of a circumstance concerning my dear friend Mr. Richardson, which shows that in life, as well as in death, God in his sovereign pleasure occasionally visits his faithful people with the special light of his countenance. Knowing that by this time you partake of my interest in that venerable character, I am tempted to transcribe the account, which I received this month in a letter from Mrs. Dikes, wife of the Rev. Mr. Dikes, of Hull (a daughter of the late Mr. Hey). She said she found it in a letter to her husband, from a colleague of his, in October, 1817, who had been attending a Clerical Society, from which the former happened to be absent.

'We were at Hotham last week: all the party pretty well, except Mr. Richardson, who had been over-exerting himself. He talked more about himself than usual; chiefly to tell us how very happy he was, and had been for half-a-year past. He seemed to describe himself as in a state of almost constant enjoyment, beyond what he had ever known; a glory shining upon all God's word and

Digitized by Google

ways, and all his dealings with him, that was unspeakably delightful to him. Of course it was very gratifying to hear him talk in this way, especially as he has usually struck so different a chord. He said he was quite an astonishment to himself; but he added, that he spoke rather under an impression that he should not meet us again.'

You will recollect the sombre complexion of Mr. R.'s religious state from his private thoughts. This gleam, however, (which is an enlargement upon what he records of himself at that period) shews how kind and indulgent the Almighty is in supplying his faithful people with these cordials in time of need .... If such heavenly enjoyments can be had in the midst of the sorrows and sufferings of this life, what must they be hereafter when possessed without alloy and without interruption!

I have detained you longer than perhaps I ought. I will only add, that as the best testimony of my obligations to you, I still endeavour to bear you in my heart at the throne of grace, (alas! how poorly and inadequately) and trust that now and then—occupied as you must be with many persons and things of more consequence—I shall be remembered in your prayers.

Mrs. Gray, who is increasingly infirm in body, but, I trust, strong in spirit, joins me in her Christian regards and best wishes. We beg also to be remembered cordially to those excellent ladies, who have favoured us with accounts of and from you. In this we do not pretend to be entirely disinterested, hoping they may be enticed to renew

Digitized by Google

these accounts, should you, as you intimate to us in print, continue unable to resume the pen.

I am, most respectfully and affectionately,
my dear Madam,
Your faithful friend and servant,
WM. GRAY.

From Sir W. W. Pepys to Mrs. H. More.

Gloucester Place, Feb. 5, 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I little thought, when I have so often sympathized with you, that our sympathy would extend to the cramp in our hands; but *hæc data pœna diu viventibus*, I am so troubled with at times, that you would not recognize my hand-writing.

The success of your last little book is enough to prove to you the relish which the public still continue to entertain for your writings; and I am very glad that I did not wait for their decision before I wrote my sincere judgment upon it, which was fresh and warm from the strong impression which I received from it.

I am delighted to hear that your health is improved, and am truly grateful for the kind and friendly wishes at the conclusion of your letter. If a good Christian could exclaim, '*Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis*,' I may be permitted to say that it is a very great comfort to me to hear you say that you will sometimes remember me in your prayers. We are both so near the awful moment when our earthly trial will be at an end, that I feel every

Digitized by Google

moment how little I have to do with this world, and how much with the next.

Sir Joshua Reynolds's Dialogues are a great literary curiosity. I came very apropos to a dissertation which I have just read, on the characters of Johnson and Warburton, which though rather too verbose, seems in many parts very well done. I found it in a late publication, called 'The Bachelor's Wife,' consisting of a very heterogeneous selection from a variety of authors.

I paid a visit yesterday to the Duchess of Manchester, who asked me whether I could recommend any new book. I told her Grace, that, strange as it might sound, the greatest *pleasure* I had received lately from any publication was from one upon a religious subject,—a tract on 'The Spirit of Prayer;' 'Oh! says she, 'that I have been reading this very morning, and I admire it exceedingly.' Now, if Pope could say with so much exultation—

Envy must own I live among the great,

how much more reason have you to exult, in having contributed so largely, as you have done, to the spiritual benefit and immortal interests of the great, through every gradation, up to that of a princess! I have often told you how much I envy you; but I do not know whether I ever confessed to you how much importance I assume, from claiming a title to your friendship, and saying, *accidentally*. 'I had a letter yesterday from *my friend* Mrs. H. More; she sent me such or such a book, but her most invaluable present was her own Bible, in which every

Digitized by Google

passage is marked which she thought particularly worthy of attention.' You see what *airs* I can give myself, when the balloon of vanity is well filled and rising. You will be glad to hear that I continue in perfect health, though I completed my eighty-fifth year on the 11th of last month, and have spirits to enjoy the amusement which variety of company affords me, after seven months' retirement in the country. You have immortalized my love of conversation in your 'Bas Bleu;' and though I can no longer boast of mixing in such circles as you and I used to meet in, yet still I feel great delight and excitation in good society.

I say nothing here of Miss Roberts's letter, because I think it requires that I should acknowledge the honour she has done me personally to her; and shall only observe that the task which, you say, has been assigned to her, is itself the greatest eulogium that can be pronounced upon her talents, judgment, and fidelity. Long may the work remain unknown, and when the time arrives that it *must* appear, may you be in a state far above the sense of all human praise, and alive to all the ecstasy of hearing, "Well done! thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Such is the earnest prayer of, my dear friend,

Yours most affectionately,

W. W. PEPYS.

Digitized by Google

From H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester to Mrs. H. More.

Bagshot Park, Feb 21, 1825.

DEAR MADAM,

I cannot refrain from troubling you with a few lines, not only to offer to you my best acknowledgments for your last very kind letter, but to return to you my warmest thanks for the edifying volume you have had the goodness to send me; which has afforded me the sincerest gratification. In stating to you how much I admired it, I must add that I am satisfied that every person who reads it with a proper mind will derive benefit from it, and that it cannot fail to do considerable good.

With great eagerness I avail myself of this opportunity of making my inquiries after your health, which I trust is improved; and of expressing my anxious hope that your truly valuable life will be long preserved.

I must request you will be assured that with perfect truth and regard I am, ever, dear Madam,

Your very sincere friend,
and faithful servant,
WILLIAM FREDERICK.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

Barley Wood, March 24, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

Whatever zeal and piety may do, flesh and blood, I am sure, with strength nearly exhausted by suf-

Digitized by Google

fering, cannot hold out. I dread the effect of such exertion. As to my unworthy self, if I were a disciple of Prince Hohenloe, I should pass for a standing miracle; and, indeed, even in the sober sense of Protestantism, I am a miracle of mercy and forbearance. I have been three times nearly given over in the last year, and with an interval of one year only, I have been confined to my chamber, and chiefly to my bed, for nearly five years. These visitations have been accompanied with great mercies, for in all this succession of dangerously high fevers, I never had one moment's delirium. I have since had an inflammation so violent that for the last six months "my right hand forgot its cunning," so that I could not hold a pen, and even now I can only scrawl a little at a time, and that not with impunity. My hand will probably never be restored.

I think that if I could see the abolition of the slavery of the body in the West Indies, and of the slavery of the soul in Ireland and Popish Europe, I could sing my *nunc dimittis* with joy. If they carry their cause in Parliament, we must pray that God may produce good out of this great evil.

Mr. Wilberforce visited me in the winter, in better health than I had expected. I earnestly hope he will devote his honourable retreat from public life to what appears to me to be an important object—the history of his *own* life, political, religious, and social. It would be a manual for statesmen as well as private Christians. It would be difficult to find another man of his deep experi-

Digitized by Google

mental religion who has been the bosom friend and associate of cabinet ministers; which he was for many years after I first knew him, and with a disinterestedness which gave a true elevation to his character.

I should be astonished at any persons of decent character taking in that infamous ———, if I did not know that the public appetite for calumny can feed on the pernicious aliment, however coarsely administered. I am ashamed to send you such a miserable scrawl, but I longed to call myself to your remembrance, that I might request your prayers. You cannot offer them where they are more needed.

When are we to expect Bishop Butler? Your's ever, my dear and honoured friend, with true regard,

Your grateful and affectionate,

H. More.

From Mr. Stephen to Mrs. H. More.

Missenden, Bucks, May 29, 1825.

My dear Madam,

I have just been reading the last chapter of your work on Prayer, and I mean to read it again to-day to a young woman in this village, to whom it will be very seasonable, for she is in the last stage of a consumption, and apparently very near her end; but likely, I fear, to have much sharper sufferings than she has yet sustained, before she is released. Happily she is a sincere and well-taught Christian; knows by experience the blessed efficacy of prayer;

Digitized by Google

and has hitherto, in the full and near prospect of approaching death, been wonderfully sustained. To say that she is patient and tranquil would be too little. She is content, thankful, and cheerful; and I should say *joyous*, if the word did not raise the idea of triumph or exaltation of spirits, which she is too meek and humble to display or feel. To this interesting sufferer, your work, especially the chapter I have just read, will, I doubt not, be highly acceptable and useful. Very many, I doubt not, in similar circumstances, will owe to you the same benefit, especially when they learn that your own couch, when you compiled it, was not 'a bed of roses, but that you were sustaining the very trials you depict, and using the same composing and invigorating cordial which your pen has recommended to others.

I most sincerely congratulate you, my dear Madam, on this very appropriate and happy finish of your labours. Of all practical subjects, prayer is the best. I would rather have prayer without faith or love, than faith and love, if they could exist without prayer; for they may be lost without it, and where it is, they will not long be wanting. I am certain of this at least, that the man who persists in prayer will not long entertain any doubt whatever of some of the most important fundamental truths of religion. He will learn from the impressive and decisive testimony of his own experience, that verily and indeed there is a God who governs the world,—intimately governs it, by a providence as particular as all the concerns, however minute,

Digitized by Google

of all his rational creatures;—that he hears and answers their petitions,—that he rewards what is right, and punishes what is wrong in their conduct, and that he is mainly intent on the purifying and elevating of their moral natures, though often under circumstances, and by means, which make a future retributory state absolutely necessary for the vindication of his justice, and mercy, and goodness, i. e. of the very attributes which prayer and experience have shewn him to possess. But the effect does not end here. Among all the various proofs we have that Christianity came from God, I know of none so strong, judging from the force of it on my own mind, as the wonderful correspondence of the gospel with all that prayer and experience teach us of the ways of God with man. Christ taught us all those wonderful truths which prayer and experience confirm. He taught us moreover what they cannot teach, but what falls in admirably with all the discoveries they make, and solves the difficulties with which those discoveries would otherwise be attended. It was he also that gave us this telescope for the discovery of unseen truths. He was our Galileo as well as our Newton, in heavenly things; for he taught us to pray; and there is no duty which by precept and example he so carefully inculcated.

I have sometimes put this argument to philosophical unbelievers, who deny or doubt a particular providence. 'You believe in the existence of the lately-discovered planets, and in other astronomical facts, which you yourself have never observed, and you would think it absurd scepticism in any man to

Digitized by Google

doubt them. Why? Because all who have used the proper glasses, and carefully made the proper observations, concur in affirming their truth. Now you will find no man who has long been in the habit of private prayer, who will not tell you that he has had many and decisive proofs, decisive at least in their number and coincidence, that his prayers were heard, and practically answered in the occurrences of his life; and though not always in the way he wished, yet very often and very strikingly even in that way, and almost always, when he has prayed earnestly, in a way which he sooner or later has discovered to be best for his temporal or moral welfare. However widely devout men disagree in other points, in this they are all agreed, and very many have declared, that things have never gone well with them through the day, when their morning prayers have been distracted, cold, or languid. To suppose that it is with all these witnesses the dream of superstition, is no less irrational than it would be to suppose that all the observers of the Georgium Sidus, of Pallas and Ceres, have been deceived by meteors, or some defect in their glasses. That the majority of mankind have had no such evidence, having never been in the habit of prayer, would be as idle an objection as that the planets just mentioned have not been seen by those who never looked for them in a proper direction, and by the aid of a proper telescope. Your scepticism is therefore as unphilosophical in the one case, as it would be in the other. You gave your confidence to Herschell, when, announcing the most stupendous discoveries,

Digitized by Google

he told you, 'Look and you shall see;' but you refuse it to Christ, when revealing a providence without which a sparrow falls not to the ground, and who when teaching a truth so credible as that God governs the world which he made, says to you, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."'

I have been led insensibly by this very interesting subject away from the purpose with which I took up the pen; which was to thank you heartily for the pleasure and honour conferred on me by the present of your work, and to make the best apology I could for not sooner acknowledging that favour. I can truly say, that had I been less sensible of its value, I should have returned thanks for it sooner, but not liking to express my sense of such a gift, from such a giver, in a hasty way, I waited for that leisure which I very rarely find. I cannot indeed say that it has never been found till now, but never before in concurrence with the recollection that I had such a letter to write.

With the highest respect and esteem,
I am, my dear Madam,
Very sincerely and affectionately your's,
JAMES STEPHEN.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Harford.

Barley Wood.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have been much entertained with your picturesque letter. Scotland is a country I should parti-

Digitized by Google

cularly like to visit, as its scenes retain so much of their original character, and have not been spoiled by art and industry; which, though very good things in themselves, yet efface the old ideas which contribute to the pleasant romance of life. I particularly envy you the sight of Staffa's cave. Its Laird, or as he styles himself, *Staffa* only, has visited me, and I remember his account of his little empire was very amusing. But if these scenes had my admiration, Dumblane would have my homage. Of Leighton I could almost say with Burnet, 'if I am not the better for that man, I shall have to answer for it at the day of judgment.' What sacrilege to demolish his cathedral!

The heat here is almost tropical. Not a blade of grass left. The complexion of my field is hardly distinguishable from the gravel walk. I believe the farmers, like Milton's Satan, 'never see the sun, except to tell him how they hate his beams.' What a fine description there is in the 11th of Jeremiah of a drought! "And the nobles sent their little ones to the water: they came to the pits and found none; they returned with their vessels empty, and were ashamed and confounded. And the ploughmen were ashamed, for there *was no grass*. And the asses snuffed up the wind, for there was *no grass!*" &c. Pray turn to the chapter.

I have just had a visit from a very old and interesting friend, Mrs. ——. We had not met for twenty-seven years. We lived much together when I lived in the great and gay world. She told me when my little book of 'Manners of the Great' was

Digitized by Google

first published, (anonymously,) she was sitting with the queen, who was reading it. When her majesty came to the passage which censured the practice of ladies in sending on Sundays for a hair-dresser, she exclaimed, 'This I am sure is Hannah More; she is in the right, and I will never send for one again.' She did not mean she would not have her hair dressed on a Sunday, but she would not compel a poor tradesman to violate the Sabbath, but rather employ one of her own household.

A letter from —— tells me that Mrs. —— is doing well after her confinement. They still feel the loss of their son. I never saw a lovelier youth, or one better disposed. *Oh vita humana chi est si bella in vista!* &c. &c. What a sweet passage in Petrarch follows! With kind love to Mrs. H——,

Believe me, my dear friend,
Your's, very sincerely,
H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Hart Davis.

1825.

My dear Sir,

I trouble your inexhaustible kindness to forward the enclosed, which contains a letter from me to a valuable man at New York. I have a warm feeling of kindness towards him, for having (as the first printer in America) printed thirty editions of Cœlebs, 1000 copies each, and so of my other unworthy writings.

I hope you are enjoying this fine weather at your country retreat. The Caledonian ramblers are

Digitized by Google

I hope, turning their faces homewards; we want them much. The face of things in Ireland, I rejoice to hear is more favourable. I have just had a letter from one of the best and wisest men in that country. Mr. Harford must know him as one of the favourite friends at Bellevue. His heart always so overflows with kindness and affection to me, that I cannot send you his letter, but I will quote part of it:—'This strange country of ours, which excites so much of the cares of the good people of England, never was so quiet, and I do verily believe that we shall have no serious disturbances; for though there is much inflammatory matter, and though there are enough flaming orators among us; yet there is a non-conductor between these two, and that is the Roman Catholic gentry, who, believe me, are very sincerely attached to the British Constitution; for they are not so blinded by party, as not to see that they may traverse the whole world, or call up the spirits of all the ancient legislators and statesmen, and that nothing could be devised to compare with the British Constitution; and be assured they will stick to it, even on the present terms; which however they are persuaded will not last, and so am I; the higher classes hang loosely to their faith, and *names* are the last things that are given up. You will at length see the advantage of letting them mix freely among you, and thereby detaching them from their angry party, and the religion of an ignorant priesthood, and thus preparing the way for the coming in of the truth. As to the roaring orators of the

Digitized by Google

Catholic Board, *we now* understand them well. Mr. —— means to swell his lawyer's bag much more than to vent his zeal for popery, and he gets so much money by it that he will never risk his neck in a rebellion. He is quite of opinion with the priest of Padua,—he would rather be excommunicated for thirty years than hanged for half an hour, though he struts upon the public stage a very Bolivar,' &c.

This, my dear Sir, is the opinion of an acute and near observer. I thought you would be amused with it. I am, I bless God, pretty well, though rather overdone with the two interfering claims of company and business. I see so many strangers whom I know not yet how to refuse. My most affectionate regards to your whole circle; I hope the Spaniard will get safe back, but, I fear, to an unhappy country.

Your's ever, my dear Sir,
With true regard,
H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Hart Davis.

Barley Wood, Oct. 28, 1825.

My dear Sir,

Miss —— told you what a singular visitor called here the other day. I had heard so much of this extraordinary being, Rowland Hill, that knowing he was on a visit in the neighbourhood, I begged my friend to bring him. I had been told so much too of his oddities in the pulpit, that I was prepared for

Digitized by Google

something amusingly absurd. But as the phrase is, I reckoned without my host, or rather without my guest. He is extremely well-bred; abounding in pointed wit, very cheerful, in argument solid, sober and sound, quite free from the infirmities of age, and retaining all those gentlemanly manners which one had rather a right to expect from his birth and early habits, than from his irregular clerical performances. As a proof that he takes good works largely into his notions of religion, when I asked him if it were true that he had vaccinated 6000 poor people with his own hand, his answer was, 'very near 8000.' He did not, to my great surprise, discover one eccentricity in manner, sentiment or language. I was well acquainted with his brother, Sir Richard, who was a man of polished manners, very agreeable, and very pious.

I fear you will be hardly able to decipher this scrawl. If your ladies are returned home, my most affectionate regards attend them.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Your very obliged and faithful,

H. More.

From the Rev. J. Foster[1] to Mrs. H. More.

Stapleton, near Bristol.

Dear Madam,

I should never have thought of such a thing as requesting your acceptance of a new copy of an

[1] Author of 'Essays,' a work which needs no other title to designate them to the reader.

Digitized by Google

old and common book, on account of the piece prefixed to this edition of it, had not Mr. Cottle told me that such a liberty had been taken by the writers of some of the Essays, accompanying the late reprints at Glasgow of a number of other old books.

I am aware that the vast accumulation on your premises, of the productions of contemporary book-makers, must have suggested to you the idea of the comfortable provision you will have of materials for lighting your fires, in case of any scarcity of chips and shavings. But, on the supposition that you will order them to be taken for that use in the *order of time*, that is of *their dates*, I may venture to calculate on a considerable term of exemption for this volume; and may even hope for it an extension of that term by way of special favour, on account of so minor a part of it being the work of any other than the excellent Doddridge.

If I could be confident in reckoning on any decay of memory in such a veteran, I should not be doing wisely in taking this opportunity of recalling to your recollection, by confessing, my sins against, I must not say courtesy, but even all civility, propriety, and decorum, in having received in former years, presents of copies of several of your valuable works, without returning so much as a line of acknowledgment. I wish I could find any better extenuation than to say, that in each instance I really did feel grateful, and very greatly flattered; that I intended writing soon to say so; that a sad habit of procrastinating all things, deferred it till I became ashamed

Digitized by Google

to write at all; and that then I said to myself in excuse, Mrs. More is, necessarily, quite certain, without being told it, that I, with every intelligent reader of her works, holds them and their author in high respect and admiration, and will be sure that I value as I ought, these personal tokens of her friendly remembrance.

Then occurred one circumstance, now many years past, which would have seemed to render it indispensable on *my own* account, however otherwise superfluous to you, to convey to you some brief but strong expression of my high and invariable respect, if I had not become informed that a suspicion excited in your mind against me had been obviated. I am referring to what you may have probably dismissed from your memory;—the appearance of an unaccountably captious article in the *Eclectic Review*. No one could be more surprised and displeased at that article than myself; and I am confident, that from no quarter did the editor receive a more speedy and indignant reprehension.

In common with all the true friends of religion, and the improvement of the age, I am gratified to think to what an extraordinary length the sovereign disposer of our allotment on earth has protracted your life and eminent usefulness. It is very pleasing to hear that you have experienced a considerable alleviation of infirmity and illness. Deeply grateful as you must be for having been appointed so long to prosecute with success so important an employment, you will wait with calm acquiescence and quiet anticipation, the hour when the great

Digitized by Google

master shall call his servant to his presence and her eternal reward.

I am, dear Madam,
With the highest respect and regard,
Your friend and servant,
J. FOSTER.

A longer interval of moderate health and spirits now succeeded, than she had for many years enjoyed, or than was considered possible by her friends. Bordering on the age of eighty-two, she was able to declare that she could scarcely recollect any part of her life in which she had been so little confined to her bed, as during the last two years. These two years however, deprived her of three of her oldest and best friends—Sir William W. Pepys, the venerable Bishop of Durham, and Lady Cremorne, who had been the last survivors of that society in which she had passed so large a proportion of her time in elegant and intellectual enjoyment, while her custom continued of paying an annual visit to London. She often reverted to it as an affecting and admonitory reflection, that she had thus seen, as it were, a whole generation pass away.

Sir William maintained an affectionate and constant correspondence with her to the last year of his life; and from the good Bishop she received more than one kind and friendly note, written with his own hand, not many months before his decease, at the age of ninety-one.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Sir W. Pepys.[1]

Barley Wood, June 17, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

I hardly know how to write to you, and still less do I know how to forbear. I would not intrude upon you in the first moments of your affliction; and indeed I had a faint hope that the sad intelligence might not be true, several false reports of the death of some of my friends having been afterwards contradicted. Most deeply do I sympathize with you and yours, on the irreparable loss of the best of fathers and of friends. When I consider the loss of lady Pepys and her family, I ought not to dwell on my own. And yet I may be allowed to mourn with no common sorrow. Our acquaintance of between forty and fifty years, which ripened into a firm and lasting friendship, has proved one of the most pleasant events of my life. He was a shining ornament of that select society in which for a long series of years we passed so many agreeable evenings together. His fine taste, his various literature, which he had always at command, his polished manners, the happy union of the gentleman and the scholar, which rendered him so interesting a companion, are still fresh in my mind and heart. I believe he was the last of that society, as he was, perhaps the most accomplished. I told him not long since that he and I were 'the leavings of Pharsalia.'

[1] Son of her late excellent correspondent.

Digitized by Google

His correspondence since our long separation has been a source of solid pleasure to me. His letters, without losing any thing of their elegance and vivacity, have been imbued with a spirit of piety truly gratifying. His last was as lively as any of its predecessors, and the hand-writing so beautiful, that I showed it as a perfect specimen. There was not in this letter the slightest mention of illness; it overflowed as usual with that devout gratitude to his heavenly Father, for the abundance of his family mercies, and the virtues of his children.

My amiable friend and companion,[1] between whom and Sir William, so many pleasant messages have past, sincerely laments him. To my poor, and schools, he was a bountiful benefactor! Death has lately thinned the ranks of my friends; among the more distinguished were the late Bishop of Salisbury, and the Dean of Canterbury. I lately reckoned up thirty physicians who had attended me in numberless successive illnesses—all taken!—I left!

You will, I trust, forgive my troubling you on this sad occasion. You probably do not remember me; but I have not forgotten your running into the drawing-room, at six years old, and giving an animated account of the discovery of America, which you had just read. I beg to be most affectionately remembered to Lady Pepys and family, who have my cordial prayers.

[1] Miss Frowd.

Digitized by Google

Though my health is better than usual, yet at my time of life, I feel on the verge of eternity. An awful, but not a fearful anticipation.

Believe me, my dear Sir,

Very truly and faithfully, your obliged,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

1825.

My dear Friend,

My health, through the great mercy of God, is marvellous, all things considered; but I am feeling the common affliction of those who live to an advanced age,—that almost all my contemporaries are dropping before me. In one month I can reckon the Bishop of Salisbury, my valuable friend the Rev. Mr. Jones, and a loss that afflicted me very deeply, that of Sir William Pepys. We had lived in undiminished friendship near fifty years; he was a scholar and a gentleman, and one of the principal ornaments of the select society in which I passed so many pleasant days; he was the Lælius of my now forgotten little poem, the *Bas Bleu*. Fifteen or twenty years ago, when I gave up London entirely, we continued our intercourse by letters, and I had the great satisfaction of remarking his gradual advance in piety. I had made him a present of a Bible, marking those portions on which I wished him more particularly to dwell: he studied it constantly. His letters for several past years, without losing any of that classic elegance for which

Digitized by Google

he was remarkable, were characterized by a spirit of devotion truly gratifying. His family character was admirable: his sons almost worshipped him. For the last seven years he has been a bountiful benefactor to my poor and my schools. I have no doubt he is accepted through Him who loved him, and gave himself for him.

Ask Mrs. W. if she remembers going to dear old Jones's church at Shipham, on her marriage! In the sixty-one years that he was in orders, he omitted duty only four times. A more exemplary minister I never knew. Ten clergymen attended his funeral, so much was he respected, though poor. As to myself, I think I was never more hurried, more engaged, or more loaded with cares than at present. I do not mean afflictions, but a total want of that article for which I built my house and planted my grove,—I mean retirement; it is a thing I only know by name. I think Miss Frowd says that I saw eighty persons last week, and it is commonly the same every week. I know not how to help it. If my guests are old, I see them out of respect; if young, I hope I may do them a little good; if they come from a distance, I feel as if I ought to see them on that account; if near home, my neighbours would be jealous of my seeing strangers, and excluding them. My *levée*, however, is from twelve to three o'clock, so that I get my mornings and evenings to myself, except now and then an old friend steals in quietly for a night or two, as the franker of this letter for example.

It is a singular circumstance, that one of my

Digitized by Google

things, '*Christian Morals*,' I believe, has just now been translated into Dutch, by a converted Jew at the Hague. *Practical Piety* has been published in Dutch at Amsterdam, of which I cannot read even the title page. Love to Mrs. W.

Your's affectionately,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Olivia Sparrow.

Barley Wood, June 9, 1825.

My dearest Lady Olivia,

It is so long since we have had any intercourse, that I am not certain on which side the debt lies, but I rather think I owe you, in common with other obligations, the debt of the last letter. I hope most cordially that the domestic health and comforts you so feelingly described are mercifully continued to you. My contemporaries are dropping away very fast. In one month only, the Bishop of Salisbury, the Dean of Canterbury, and my old and accomplished friend, Sir William Pepys. Our acquaintance began near fifty years ago: he was the 'Lælius' in my little poem, 'The Bas Bleu.' As he was the chief ornament, so he was the last survivor of the select society which gave birth to that trifle. The scholar and the polished gentleman were united in him. Since my giving up spending my winters in London, we have kept up an interesting correspondence. His son, the present baronet, has written me a letter full of the overflowings of sorrow and filial piety. The next death

Digitized by Google

within the month, of my aged friends, was that of the venerable clergyman of Shipham, my holy, heavenly-minded neighbour, Mr. Jones, who in sixty-one years had never missed his Sunday duty but four times. All the clergy for many miles round attended him to the grave, and I hope will join to pay his funeral expences. I was so fortunate as to obtain this little living for him thirty-five years ago.

Among my late stranger-visitors was a lady who had been maid of honour to the Empress Catherine of Russia. She has the remains of beauty, was richly dressed, sensible, and was not ignorant of religion. She was originally English.

I am expecting my valuable friend the Dean of Salisbury, the king's chaplain, from Brighton. I had the great satisfaction to hear that his majesty received the sacrament on Easter-day, not as a *king*, but as a *Christian;* not solitarily or separately, but with his servants. My most respectful regards to Lady Mandeville.

Ever, my dearest lady,
your obliged and faithful,
H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

Barley Wood, August 3, 1825.

My dear Friends,

I received your very kind and interesting letter with that pleasure which every attention and remembrance of me from you is calculated to inspire. I rejoice to hear such favourable accounts of the

Digitized by Google

health of both, and that you have it still in contemplation to visit England once more. Though I hardly dare look forward to the hope of profiting by that visit, yet I ought thankfully to acknowledge that it has pleased God to restore me to a large measure of health. I see a great deal of company (a great deal too much says my kind physician) but it is only in the morning; my day *levée* is from twelve to three, and I have the whole evening to recover. I am, however, confined to my own and the adjoining room, more through precaution than necessity.

It is a singular satisfaction to me that I have lived to see such an increase of genuine religion among the higher classes of society. Mr. Wilberforce and I agree that where we knew one instance thirty years ago, there are now a dozen or more. 'It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

Nothing could gratify me more than your very pleasing information that Mr. Huber, to my other obligations, has added that of translating my little work on Prayer. May the Almighty water this labour of love with the dew of his blessing. I never was more agreeably surprised than with the extraordinary success of this small publication. I was to all appearance on a dying bed, when I felt an irresistible impulse to do *something* for my Christian friends in my last days. Beyond *them* I never looked for any further circulation, but to my great surprise, it is already in the fourth edition, and about five thousand copies have been sold.

Digitized by Google

It is an humbling thing to know that instrumentality may be separated from personal piety. But dear Mr. Huber is in all respects eminently qualified for the work he has so kindly undertaken. He is a consummate master in both languages, and his style is perfectly pure.

A friend from the Hague writes me that my 'Practical Piety' has been lately translated by a converted Jew. How wonderful! I had lately a visit from the principal American bookseller of New York, who told me he had sold thirty thousand copies of 'Cœlebs,' and he added it did more good there than my decidedly religious writings; because it was read universally by *worldly* people, who might shrink from some of the others. You would be surprised to see the number of superior Americans who visit me. They are a very improving people. They are running the race of glory with us; I hope they will make us quicken our pace.

I did receive and admire the admirable work you were good enough to send me, 'L'Explication des Caractères de la Charité,' which, I believe is not the work you now mention, though it seems to be by the same author. I think I have never had any longing for any thing of which I have heard or read since my confinement of five years, so much as for your enchanted castle, which seems made for the habitation of sylphs and fairies; though to be sure the luxury of hot-houses, &c. seems more suited to beings encumbered with flesh and blood.

I have survived almost all my contemporaries. I

Digitized by Google

have lost in one month several distinguished persons of nearly my own standing. The last has been the deepest wound,—Sir W. Pepys. He was the Lælius of my now-forgotten poem the 'Bas Bleu.' For forty-five years we lived in the closest friendship. He was perfectly the scholar and the gentleman. Immediately before that illness, which ended in his death, I had a letter from him, written in an exquisite hand (at eighty-five) full of wit and classical taste. We kept up our correspondence since I left London, and I had the satisfaction to witness his growing piety, and taste for spiritual things. He was the last survivor of our old set.

About twenty years ago I had one of my dreadful fevers, in which I lost both smell and taste; and I have never in the smallest degree recovered either. You will say this was a hardship; but it was a mercy, as all divine appointments are; for having been compelled to live on medicine for many years rather than food, what disgusts have I been spared! Then how richly has it been made up, in the more valuable, I may say intellectual, senses, for my sight and hearing are perfect. We shall always find mercy behind a cloud if we look for it, and the doctrine of *compensation* is a favourite theme with me.

With my most cordial prayers for your happiness in time and eternity, believe me,

My dear friends,

Your faithful and very affectionate,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. D. Wilson.

Barley Wood, Sept. 2, 1825.

MY VERY DEAR, KIND FRIEND,

If ingratitude be worse than the sin of witchcraft, then must I be worse than the witch of Endor. I may say with truth, what a great man said of himself *without* truth, that 'I spend my life in laboriously doing nothing.' Did you think it possible that there could have been found a point of resemblance between me and Grotius?[1]—or to go on quoting, I resemble Macbeth, not indeed murdering my king, but my time, for,

> 'Like a man on double business bent,
> I stand in doubt which I shall first achieve,
> And so do neither.'

Now I have nearly exhausted my whole stock of learning upon you, I will endeavour to extract plain matter of fact out of my own head, or rather out of my own heart, for that I take to be the seat of gratitude. I cannot, however, say that I am going even now to be original, because I have frequently aforetime had occasion to express to you my thanks for repeated kindnesses of the same nature. I fear it has been too much my practice to try to appear better than I am, but I must do myself the justice, in the present instance, to say that I appear worse; for your precious treasures, both old

[1] The phrase has been often borrowed; but I believe it first occurs in Seneca de Brev. Vit.—EDITOR.

Digitized by Google

and new, did not reach me till some weeks after you sent them to Mrs. M.

I have been exceedingly concerned to hear that you have been again indisposed. I pray God to render your physical powers as efficient as your intellectual, for the purposes to which they have been so successfully devoted. Miss Frowd reads me one of your sermons every evening, and we find that 'increase of appetite doth grow with what it feeds on.' Another quotation! I really cannot help it, though I may truly say that for a very long season,

> 'Verse I abjured, nor will forgive that friend,
> Who in my hearing shall a rhyme commend.'

Again! but like Desdemona, 'I do conceal the thing I am, by seeming otherwise.' For I declare seriously in prose and truth that this unhappy schism in the Bible Society afflicts me by day, and keeps me awake by night. I know not how you, my dear Sir, feel on this all-important subject, and perhaps I may be presumptuous in setting the opinion of an obscure ignorant person like myself against that of so many wise and good men. My two quarto Bibles printed at our two universities, have both the Apocrypha: but who ever thought of reading it?

> 'Perhaps to be forbid may tempt one
> To wish for what one never dreamt on.'

I wish these rhymes did not put themselves in my way—but what can I do? I heartily wish the Apocrypha was out of every Bible; but if the Papists will not take a Bible without it, is there any

Digitized by Google

comparison between having a Bible with it, and having *no Bible at all?* The one is like a slight disease compared with, perhaps, death—

'Death! unrepealable, eternal death!'

I must transcribe a passage from a letter just received from my good friend Mr. Butterworth: 'Our agent from South America, Mr. Thompson, is just returned. He brings most gratifying intelligence of the impatience of the people to possess the scriptures. A Columbian Bible Society for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures at home and abroad, is established in the Roman Catholic capital of Bogota. The Secretary of State for Foreign affairs presided at the meeting, with the Minister of Finance, and some of the more eminent priests, who triumphantly confuted the more ignorant priests who were too narrow-minded for the circulation of the scriptures.' I never was so ready to sing my '*nunc dimittis*' as when I read this! What answer can be made to this? but my nerves will bear no more.

That excellent being —— has hitherto, I understand chiefly disseminated the New Testament. Now we all acknowledge this to be the best book in the world; but still there is wanting the strong basis of the Old Testament to give firmness and validity to the New. The patterns of heavenly things which are shadowed out in the ancient scriptures, acquire their value by their exact correspondence to the heavenly things themselves; when

Digitized by Google

the fulness of time was come; as these in their turn derive confirmation by their perfect agreement with types and figures. *Query*, whether by withholding the Old Testament, as a *plan* to avoid the present difficulty, the enemy may not charge us with the sin of "*taking* from the Word of God." But, alas! I am a miserable theologian,

Ever, my dear Friend, your's,

H. More.

From the Rev. Rowland Hill to Mrs. H. More.

Bristol, October, 1825.

Dear Madam,

An old man, who can scarcely see to read, has entertained himself with making play-things for children, and you have a large family of them. He conceives, however, that his boxes are better calculated for the private circles of children, than for public schools. However, as you are so warm and kind a patroness of early education, he sends you some of them; and more are at your service, if required. It may be necessary to observe, that there are ten alphabets in each set of the letter-boxes; and what additions are made to the vowels and consonants mostly in use are to be seen in the enclosed card sent with this. A neat and impressive poet is rarely to be found, but without much vanity we may attempt to rhyme for children. Such a chiming style of writing is the best calculated to impress their memories, and to engage their attention.

I send you also my little tracts, made since my

Digitized by Google

short residence in this city. Such a liberty, however, I should not have taken, but at your own request. Had you seen them in manuscript, I am sure the public would have been the better for it; as it is, perhaps another edition may still be amended by your corrections. You will see by the tenor of these few pages, that public-houses, the bane of the country, excite the strongest indignation of my mind. Nothing worse, excepting Antinomianism in the church. I really have so much better an opinion of hogs than of these latter, that were any of that sort to be permitted to make any of their vile preachments in their hog-sties, I think the stench of it would prove so disgusting to them as would banish them from their own filthy abode as fast as their legs would enable them to make their escape.

At the conclusion of these dialogues you will find a few more lines drest in rhyme. Had they past under your correcting eye, before the public eye had been upon them, I should with the greater confidence have sent them to the press; but I find, if ever I attempt any thing of this sort, I soon aim beyond my reach. It is easier for me to trot on with my good old friends Sternhold and Hopkins, and by the aid of similar abilities; and in their language I bring this letter to a close.

> 'With this my love doth come to you,
> My love it is both sure and true,
> And eke, the same likewise, also,
> Unto your household, it doth go.'

One stanza of theirs, however, I shall never

Digitized by Google

equal ;—may it be my last song when I escape out of this body of sin and death.

'Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask!
This is the total sum:
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
Lord, let thy mercy come!'

Forgive, dear Madam, this little bit of paper loquacity from one that scarcely sees what he writes, though still

Your affectionate

ROWLAND HILL.

From Mrs. H. More to Sir Wm. Pepys.

October, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot describe the mixed feelings with which I perused the letter you have had the goodness to honour me with. It awakened fresh regret in my heart for the inestimable friend I have lost, and augmented my esteem for his successor, for so anxiously fulfilling what he supposed to be ever the *wish* of his lamented father. The strong family attachments of him, for whom I shall never cease to mourn, were among the most amiable qualities of his character; and his often-repeated pious gratitude to God for having given him such children, was constantly expressed from first to last with a warmth and energy I have never seen *surpassed*, I might perhaps say, *equalled*. Speaking of yourself, he always named you, not so much as his son, as his best and most confidential friend, with

Digitized by Google

whom, as the Psalmist says, "he took sweet counsel."

I shall most thankfully accept the liberal sum you so generously offer to send me. It is indeed most gratuitous on your part, and very acceptable on mine, as my schools consist of six hundred children, and the friends who used to help me out a little are dead. I do not know if I ever mentioned to my admirable correspondent, that, attached to my schools, in three different parishes, I instituted thirty-five years ago, a female club, for the parents of my children. I continue to give them an annual festivity, when every girl bred in my schools, and belonging to their respective clubs, if they have maintained a virtuous character, receives what they are pleased to call the bride's portion on the club-day. This envied portion does not amount to a guinea, but I think it has helped to promote sobriety. I have the satisfaction to know, that by petty accumulations and long perseverance, though the members of the club only subscribe sixpence a month, I shall leave these poor people possessed of nearly two thousand pounds in the three parishes. I have long since placed it in the funds, where it is accumulating. I have put it in trustees' hands. The club is now no further expence to me, except the annual feast, where my kind friend, Miss Frowd, represents me. Since my inability to be with them, to give it more credit, ten neighbouring clergymen, with some other gentry, attend, and make tea for the poor women. I should not have dwelt so long on this subject, but as an instance of what perse-

Digitized by Google

verance and petty savings may accomplish. It explains how misers, with small means, grow rich by petty savings.

Many thanks for your report of the health of Lady P. and your family. My own health is rather better than usual, and yet I account myself, from my advanced age and battered constitution, on the verge of eternity.

I will venture to conclude with the apostolic benediction, by recommending you to God and the word of his grace, and remain, my dear Sir,

Your faithful, obliged, and affectionate,

H. More.

P.S. Please to direct to Sir P. Pole to send the £100. to Heythorne's bank, Bristol, for me.

From Mrs. H. More to Lady Olivia Sparrow.

Barley Wood, Dec. 1825.

My dearest Lady Olivia,

I grieve heartily to think how long, how very long it is since we have had any communication together. I have been overdone with cares, and business, and company, to such a degree, as to have put it out of my power to indulge in the high gratification of *correspondence* in the primary and best sense of the word, which I take to be the *responding* of the *heart* in friendship. I steal at last a quiet quarter of an hour to assure my dear Lady O. that forgetfulness or wilful negligence has had no part in my silence. I have long been wishing to know the state of your health, and that of Lady

Digitized by Google

Mandeville and her dear little ones, and whether the measles are increased; in short all about you and yours, in all of whom I must ever take the deepest interest. My own health, through the great mercy of God, has been better than for some years past. It is a matter of wonder as well as gratitude that this should be the case at my advanced age, though I have as much employment and fatigue as at any former period. Among my too numerous visitors I have the pleasure to say that there are many who are among the 'excellent of the earth, and such as delight in virtue.' I am, however, under the necessity of limiting the time for receiving *strangers*, (of whom I see a great number,) to between the hours of one and three, thus reserving to myself a long morning and a long afternoon. Among my *friends* I indulge in a greater latitude. Daniel Wilson has been staying several days and nights here. Oh! how you would enjoy his devout energy, the heart-felt and heart-awakening piety of his prayers, and his expounding of Scripture.

My neighbour[1] is truly a most warm and zealous Christian. I have long watched his progress in religion. He has been at the opening of his new church near Dublin, which has cost him four thousand pounds. He has endowed the church, the school, and minister, so that it is always secured to be in pious hands. I have now been confined seven years and two months to my apartment, consisting of two rooms, having opened a communication to the adjoining one, which I have made a drawing-

[1] Lord Mount Sandford.

Digitized by Google

room, so that I have room for exercise; it is no want of strength which confines me, but my friendly physician will not allow me to walk out, as a cold has so often threatened to be fatal to me.

I am almost ashamed of this egotism, but I hope you will pay me in kind. Though I boast of my health, my mind is in a continued state of anxiety for the distress which surrounds me. You have heard me speak of the two mining villages, where I have had a school nearly fifty years, of about 300 young and old. This gives me a peculiar interest in the wants of these poor people; for though their ground is covered with the ore by which they used to subsist, they cannot sell any, such is the state of trade! If I were not so old, and of course on the very verge of eternity, not looking forward with the expectation of passing through another cold winter, I could not do what I have lately done, and am now doing for these suffering people. They are quite insulated on the Mendip hills, and though their number amounts to twelve hundred, there is not one able to assist another with a basin of broth. If, my dearest lady, you would spare a small charity, I shall most thankfully dispose of it. Pray pardon this freedom. How many years since we have met! O what delight would it afford me once more to see you. But we must content ourselves with praying for each other, till, in God's appointed time, we meet in that blessed land where there is neither sin, nor sorrow, nor separation.

Your's affectionately,

H. More.

Digitized by Google

The visitors to Barley Wood daily increased in number, so as often to overwhelm her with fatigue. And when her friends remonstrated against such exhausting interruptions, she replied with her usual hilarity,—'If my visitors are young, I hope I may perhaps be enabled to do them some good; if old, I hope to receive some good from them. If they come from far, I cannot refuse to see them after they have incurred (though so little worth it) so much trouble and possibly expence to visit me; and if they live near, I could not be so ungracious and so unkind as to shut out my neighbours.'

Amongst her most interesting visitors about this time were Dr. Marshman, of whose invaluable Christian labours and interesting and informing conversation she spoke with great delight; and the pious and eccentric Rowland Hill, whose interview with her is related in so lively a manner by her kind friend Miss Frowd, then resident in the house, that she must forgive the liberty here taken of introducing a portion of her letter.

'You cannot imagine how delighted we were with dear old Rowland; instead of a coarse, quaint being, disposed to deal out his witty sarcasms against all, however good, who were not of his *particular genus*, we found a mild mellowed Christian, of a liberality which really astonished us! He quite overflowed with amiable and truly pious conversation, and this was so seasoned with point, humour, and a delightful oddity which was all his own, that we were beyond measure entertained as

Digitized by Google

well as edified by his company, and it made the three hours he spent with us, appear no more than half an hour. He talked with cordial love of Wilberforce, and spoke very highly of Archbishop Magee. He is an excellent hater of Antinomian doctrines, and I was glad to see such a soundness of Christian principle in the good old man. Upon the question being put to him 'How many persons he had vaccinated with his own hand?' Mrs. M. said, 'I have heard so many as six thousand.' 'Yes, Madam,' he replied, 'nearer eight thousand.' We talked of every body, from John Bunyan to John Locke, and he really showed an excellent discrimination and tact in character. But the most beautiful feature of all was the spirit of love and charity which was eminently conspicuous in this Christian veteran. I cannot express to you how interesting a spectacle it was to see these two *already* half-beatified servants of their common Lord, greeting one another for the first, and probably the last time on this side Jordan, preparatory to the consummation of an union and friendship which will last for ever in the regions of eternal felicity. I suppose that no two persons, in their own generation, have done more good in their *respective ways* than Hannah More and Rowland Hill. Both have exceeded fourscore; both retain health and vigour of intellect; both are on the extreme verge of eternity, waiting for the glorious summons, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." He concluded this very interesting visit with a fine prayer, which was poured forth in an excellent

Digitized by Google

voice and manner. I really don't know that upon any occasion I have been more gratified.'

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

Barley Wood, 1826.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

This comes with my kind love to you both: I am pretty well for me, and hope you are very well for you. Poor Miss Frowd is rather over-worked—yesterday was a most theological day. Early in the morning arrived dear old Rowland Hill and another saintly man. The veteran gave us an incomparable prayer. Our next guests were dear good Mr. ——. Miss Frowd is delighted with his deeply devout mind; they dined and staid till evening, when they gave place to Dr. Bridges, who drank tea, and passed the evening. He prayed and expounded in his energetic and powerful way. We had several others of the masculine gender, but I think, not a *single* woman (I don't mean an *unmarried* one) all the day.

We have settled with Mr. Hensman to receive the sacrament on Wednesday morning, about eleven or twelve o'clock I suppose. We may expect Madame Margaret to join us. I grieve that I could not send a letter inclosed in one from the Duchess of Beaufort. It was the dying history of a little sainted child of Lady Elizabeth O'Brien. It was such a picture of infant piety as I never heard. I had not time to copy it, but it drew tears, not only from my eyes, but from those of others. He called

Digitized by Google

for passages of scripture frequently. He was so gentle, that after a rattling in his throat, which immediately preceded his death, he said, 'Indeed I could not help making that noise.'

Saturday.—This day has trebled the number of females to the male list. God bless you both.

H. MORE.

From Mrs. More to Mr. Hart Davis.

Barley Wood, March 16, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have had the great pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Harford's company for a couple of days. Of these two dear friends, the former visits Barley Wood officially, as he has long been appointed to the dignified title of 'Comptroller of my forests;' over which he has such complete sovereignty, that not a bough is cut, nor a sapling planted, without his express command. He has just exercised his *pleins pouvoirs* by presiding at the grand and interesting operation of cutting down above a hundred trees. It has made me shrink a little, to be sure, to behold such a demolition of that, which a few years ago, I thought could never be thick enough, but which were now spoiling each other's beauty by their too near approach.

I am quite delighted with Mr. Peel for the plain, intelligible, and practical good sense he has shewn in getting rid of all that tautologous, trifling multiplication of statutes, which he has so well described, and, I trust, so successfully cleared

Digitized by Google

away. I am a miserable politician, but it requires little skill to see the beauty of simplicity, good judgment, and rational conduct.

Pray offer my kind regards to all your household.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very obliged and attached,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Hart Davis.

My dear Sir,

I fear you will say I am too old to write nonsense, but I plead, as my privilege, that I am approaching the season of my second childhood, —when nonsense is almost as pardonable as in the *first*. Such as it is, it is spick and span new, the scene having just past under my window. The foolish thought struck me, and except some little additions in writing down, it is as I spoke it, and as my young friend took it down. It may, perhaps, divert Miss Davis.

Your's, dear Sir,

Very truly,

H. More.

This heroic poem was spoken extempore, not written, on seeing the body of a large dead pig dragged up the hill to the house for dissection.

The saddest sight that ere was seen,
Was piggy rolling up the green!
Though dragged, he still would roll alone
Downward, like Sisyphus's stone.

Digitized by Google

This pig, as good as e're was sold,
Was worth—not quite his weight in gold.
That pork's unwholesome, doctors tell us,
Though of the fact I'm somewhat jealous.
And I believe, beyond all question,
Bacon is sovereign for digestion;
For this one cause, among a few,
I'm glad I was not born a Jew.
No quadruped like piggy claims
To give his flesh such various names.
The calf and sheep half-starve the glutton,
By yielding only veal and mutton;
While all extol the liberal swine,
For griskin, and the savoury chine;
How often does the brawny flitch
Adorn the table and *enrich!*
The stately ham, the rasher small,
Are liked in every state and all.
Who will confess, they see no good in
The poignant sausage or black-pudding?—
The spare-rib, sweet-bone, ears, and snout,
My bill of fare will quite make out;
For I disdain my song to close
By stooping to the pettitoes.
He ne'er was seen to dance a jig,
Though a genteel and graceful pig;
Yet when he round my field would prance,
It might be called *a country dance.*
Those *men* who dancing lives have led,
Are worse than nothing when they're dead.
While piggy's goodness ne'er appears,
Till closed his eyes and deaf his ears.
Though feeding spoilt his shape and beauty,
Yet feeding was in him a duty:
In spite of this reproach or that
'Twas his sole duty to grow fat.
Death was to him no awful sentence,
No need for sorrow or repentance:
How many a *gourmand* stout and big,
Might envy thy last hour, O pig!

Sus,

From my stye

Barley Wood.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

April, 1826.

DEAR, VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

If that text be true, (and I am inclined to think every aphorism in the book from which it is taken, is) that it is good to be always zealously affected in a good cause,[1] then are your present labours well applied. I beg earnestly that you will never omit to use my name where you use your own. I have already subscribed at Liverpool—I, however, insist upon subscribing here also, as the meanest name is a help in a new place—so do not scold about it. Last Thursday was the Missionary meeting; the next day brought me three carriages full of the holy missioners and missionesses; Bickersteth, Biddulph, Elwyn, Mr. Hoare, (an Irish clergyman of talents and piety,) some other clergy, and the dear Powys's of course. They made me a long and most pleasant visit: it was not the worst part of it, that Mr. Bickersteth closed it with a fine prayer, in which he gave a kind of abstract of the conquests of Christianity in most of the desolate corners of the earth, especially India, where good Bishop Heber is acting like an apostle.

Before I thank you for your very interesting letter, I must unburthen myself of a tragedy and a comedy, or rather farce. A lady settled at L—— some years ago, of whom I had never heard; a genteel and very worthy woman, with

[1] The Anti-Slavery cause.

Digitized by Google

several children, very charitable and good to the sick poor; the husband, the greatest monster, as Hamlet says, 'that e'er my conversation coped withal,' an avowed Atheist, and reprobate of the most abandoned kind. He had been to —— where he has a considerable property, to settle his affairs; I forget the particulars of the voyage, but he and his brother got as far as the harbour, when the ship was wrecked, and both brothers and their substance were cast away; not a creature in the ship perished except themselves! I have written a few lines to the poor woman, and sent her the little book on prayer—do pray for her!

I have hardly the heart to give the farce so soon after this dreadful story. The other day I received a parcel from Wrington, bundled up in a coarse brown paper; I found it was a Latin Essay on Homer's Iliad; the very name of the author was in Latin, just as Monsieur de Thou styled himself 'Thuanus.' There was a short letter inclosed, saying, I am tutor to Mr. ——'s children, and beg leave to dedicate this work to Mrs. H. More, desiring her inspection of it:' I was out of breath in my haste to decline both honours; deeply sensible as I was, and naturally must be of such a distinction, I gave him some friendly advice as to the great expense of printing, unless he were sure of a great sale, which was always uncertain: bear in mind, it is Mr. —— the little shopkeeper at ——, to whose sons he is tutor!

I have this day received a parcel of my early letters to Sir William Pepys, beginning at 1780, or

Digitized by Google

soon after; I enclose Sir William W. Pepys's letter to you; had you not better acknowledge it? Though I have not shown it to Homer's critic, yet as I am proud of patronizing *men* of genius, you must present the inclosed trifle to your learned little nephew, who seems to have made no small progress in the *harts* and *sences*.[1] Do not scold again, for I suppose I shall overflow with wealth when Mr. ——'s *little*, shall be added to Mr. ——'s nothing. I get frequent bad nights and mornings, but am pretty well by the middle of the day. I fear my head will not last out my body, but I am in the hands of the great Physician. I thought these inclosures would interest you. Take care of dear ——'s letter, as I have promised it to a friend for an autograph. This week is 'Saints' Jubilee;' I suppose you will visit all, but that which your mean sex prohibits.

Every body has been reading —— as a work of the deepest piety: but I, who have only lately looked into it, stumbled at the threshold, at the low theological standard with which it opens. I have just now been looking further into it, and think, that though there is in it considerable ability, there is some defect of taste, and in my opinion, some false views.

God bless you both,

Most affectionately your's,

H. More.

[1] Alluding to a ridiculous account which a farmer's wife gave of her daughter's education.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

Barley Wood, April, 1826.

MY DEAR AND VERY KIND FRIENDS,

Many people who appear wicked to others are very righteous in their own eyes. Now, as to myself, I not only appear to *you* a monster of ingratitude, but feel and fairly acknowledge that I appear so to myself. And this in more ways than one. That a most interesting letter from you both should have been so shamefully neglected by me is crime sufficient; but how is the offence aggravated by my remaining so long silent, and apparently insensible, to the great honour dear Mr. Huber has done me, and the great obligation he has laid upon me, by undertaking the laborious work of translating my little volume into French. He is such a consummate master of both languages, that I am persuaded it will be as perfectly executed as Cœlebs was. I really feel more than I can express of gratitude to this very kind and able friend. I shall be much gratified with Madame Necker's critique, and hope she will not spare any censure on the English author, whatever she may do on the French translator. Though rather a careless writer myself, owing to extreme and blameable rapidity, I yet think purity of style of no little importance: as far as concerns perspicuity it is one of the great charms of composition: further than this I am not fastidious. Style is an excellent garnish, but it is not of itself substantial food. Pray assure this

Digitized by Google

amiable and afflicted lady, Madame Necker, that I truly sympathize with her in her various trials; but pray remind her of a truth which she knows, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." And "though chastening is not joyous but grievous, yet it afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby." I shall long to see myself in my French dress. This little book is also just now translated into Dutch, as also my Practical Piety. You are so kind as to take such an interest in me and my concerns, that you will forgive the egotism, when I tell you that 6000 copies of the 'Spirit of Prayer' were sold within the year, and the sixteenth large edition of Cœlebs, and the fourteenth of Practical Piety have been lately published. I fear you will think me very vain if I go on to say that the chief bookseller of *New York*, who lately came to see me, said he had printed and sold thirty editions of Cœlebs. He added that it had, he believed, done more good in America than any of my other performances, because it was more read by worldly people, than my more *professedly* religious works. I dare not look back on what I have written, having, I *hope*, never said so much of myself and my writings before.

I saw Dr. and Mrs. Randolph yesterday. The poor Dr. has an afflicting visitation: one eyelid is quite fallen down over the eye, but when lifted, the organ of sight is perfect, and there seems no defect in vision. It is supposed to be a paralysis in the eyelid. This is particularly melancholy to a studious man and a preacher. She is quite well.

Digitized by Google

There has been a missionary meeting at Bristol. All clergymen of high talents and character. These, added to the cream of the Bristol clergy, came to see me yesterday. We had much interesting conversation, and the eminent secretary of the London Society gave us an admirable prayer before we parted. It contained an abstract of their successful attempts to carry Christianity into all the dark corners of the habitable globe; especially in India, where their labours are patronized by the excellent Bishop of Calcutta. It is astonishing what good has already been effected; and I trust it is only a prelude to that which is to come. But I have deferred too long to name the disastrous state of the poor church of Geneva, the cradle of Protestantism! Your account of the schism of some, the imprudence and unjustifiable violence of others, is truly afflicting; and I deeply commiserate dear Mr. Huber's pious and correct feelings, which are exposed to such unchristian warfare. *Your* venerable minister, I trust, will be supported by divine grace, and his own firm principles. I pray that things may mend, and that you will be able, as I am sure you will be willing, to tell me so.

In our own country, among much that is profligate and corrupt, I am happy to say there is an increase of religion among many of the higher classes.

As to secular concerns, we have lived in a state of alarm, and want of public confidence that threatened sad consequences; but the panic is nearly over, and I trust all will soon be set right.

Digitized by Google

I conclude with the Apostle, by commending you to God and the word of his grace, and am

My dear Friends,
your affectionate and grateful,
H. More.

From His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester to Mrs. H. More.

Gloucester House, May 10, 1826.

Dear Madam,

In returning you many thanks for the letter I had this morning the pleasure of receiving from you, I have to express my sense of your kind attention in sending me the admirable little Ballads that were inclosed in it. I am satisfied that their circulation in the disturbed districts will be of great use; and I must be allowed to say, how delightful it is to see, that every moment of your time is devoted to doing good; and that on every occasion you come forward to promote the interests of your country, and the happiness of mankind.

I am ever with the sincerest regard, and the highest respect and esteem,

Dear Madam,
Your very faithful friend and servant,
William Frederick.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. D. Wilson.

(Extract.)

August 3, 1826.

As to their reproaching you with being a Calvinist, 'I wish,' as Bishop Horsley said in his incomparable charge, 'that before they abuse Calvinism, they would just take the pains to inquire what it is.' I hope to make you smile for a moment, when I tell you this story. A little party was sitting at a *comfortable* game of whist, when one of the set having a slight head-ache, turned about and asked a lady who was sitting by, to take her cards for a few minutes; the lady excused herself by saying, that really she could not play; on which the other exclaimed, 'Now, that is what I call Calvinism!' It is a pity that Bishop Horsley could not have been by to have heard this satisfactory exposition of the doctrine—and so practical too!

You must not fancy that I am grown poetical in my old age. I have long abjured all attempts at works of imagination. The only one of my youthful fond attachments which exists still in its full force, is a passion for scenery, raising flowers, and landscape gardening, in which I can still indulge in some measure, as far as opening a walk from my chamber window, among a little grove of trees I myself planted twenty-four years ago. I wish you could come and see how I flourish in my small territory. A little change of scene, and a little journey would do you good, and I should be quite

Digitized by Google

happy if you and your's would spend two or three days here.

But I am running away from my object, which is, that I scribbled the inclosed rhymes in a state of mind not very different from that which you describe. Perhaps you will not be displeased at the similarity of our sentiments. You will be so good as not to let this bagatelle go out of your own hands. After all that religion can do, and really does, in respect to our feelings, we may yet say with Dr. Young,

> 'Go bid physicians preach our *veins* to temper,
> And with an argument new set a *pulse*.'

When you think of one who stands peculiarly in need of the prayers of her Christian friends, think, I beseech you, of

Your very faithful and affectionate,

H. More.

SOLITARY MUSINGS.

Lord! when dejected I appear,
And love is half absorbed in fear,
E'en then I know I'm not forgot,
Thou'rt present, though I see thee not;
Thy boundless mercy's still the same,
Though I am cold, nor feel the flame,
Though dull and hard my sluggish sense,
Faith still maintains its evidence.
O would thy cheering beams so shine,
That I might always feel thee mine!
Yet though a cloud may sometimes rise,
And dim the brightness of the skies;
By faith thy goodness I will bless;
I shall be safe, though comfortless:
Still, still my grateful soul shall melt,
At what in brighter days I felt;

Digitized by Google

O wayward heart! thine is the blame,
Though I may change, GOD is the same.
Not feebler faith, nor colder prayer,
My state and sentence shall declare,
Nor nerves nor feelings shall decide;
By safer signs I shall be tried.
Is the fixed tenor of my mind
To Christ and righteousness inclined?
For sin, is my contrition deep?
For past offences do I weep?
Do I submit my stubborn will
To Him who guides, and guards me still?
Then shall my peaceful bosom prove,
That God, *not loving* is, but *Love*.

From Mrs. H. More to an awakened Infidel.

Barley Wood, Aug. 27, 1826.[1]

SIR,

I have received your very affecting letter. I have read it with deep attention, and feel sincerely interested in the narrative of your own state of mind. Your candid confession, however, and the deep sense you express of horror for your unhappy situation, give me a strong hope that through the infinite grace and mercy of God in Christ, you may be restored to peace of mind here, and find pardon and acceptance hereafter. There is a humility, a self-condemnation in your letter, which give an evidence of deep repentance. The best counsel I can give, is what you know already. Be frequent in prayer. Offer up all your petitions in the name, and through the merits, death, and intercession of

[1] The reader is reminded that Mrs. More was now in her eighty-second year.

Digitized by Google

the blessed Saviour of sinners. Read the Psalms, which are a storehouse inexhaustible of prayer. Read the New Testament, especially the gospel of St. John. Again, I repeat, "watch and pray," and remember that to doubt the will and power of God to forgive, and to cherish despair, is a greater sin than perhaps you have ever committed. Have no doubt or fears except of yourself; never distrust God. Observe the beautiful view taken of belief and practice, in the various definitions of Christianity, viz. 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' Again, 'without faith, it is impossible to please God;' "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

I shall take the liberty to send you a very few small books by the Bristol coach to F——. You will pay particular attention to Bishop Gastrell on the Promises. Oh, read those promises: get them not only by head, but by heart. They are the precious food which sustains the Christian life. Family prayer is a commanded duty; you will find also some excellent prayers in the small edition of Doddridge.

O Sir! lose no time; do not content yourself with *intending*. "*Now* is the appointed time." Do not fancy it is too late; it is never too late to *begin*, but it is always too late to *delay*. Be sure to reject all dark and gloomy thoughts, as suggestions of the great enemy of souls. I have always admired that expression of Scripture, "Through the terrors of the Lord we *persuade* men;" observe the gracious word *persuade*, when one might have feared the awful one of *terrify*. Let it be your especial care

Digitized by Google

to vindicate the ways of Divine Providence to your children: show them how strikingly they are proved in sacred, and even in profane history. In both they will see, that prosperity is no certain mark of God's favour, nor adverse circumstances any proof of his displeasure. Read to them the 12th chapter of the Hebrews,—there they will see that "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth," that he does not indulge, but scourge, every son whom he receiveth. Without these instances, we should want one of the strongest confirmations of a future state of retribution; there all these discrepancies will be reconciled, and the love of God, under the severest dispensations, be made obvious. Have you no enlightened friend, no neighbouring pious minister with whom you could confer on all these important subjects? It would be far better to open your heart to some decided Christian, than to let these fatal feelings prey on your heart in secret. Forgive the freedom of this letter; her poor prayers shall be offered to our heavenly Father for you, by

Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

My very dear Friend,

Your kind and interesting letter cheered my heart, and served to put me in more humour with myself than it found me. It brought back former days to my mind. I too, who am much older than

Digitized by Google

you, have not one contemporary left. My youthful set, the Johnsons, the Garricks, the Burkes, the Bryants, the Reynolds's, &c, I do not reckon, as they were old; of my second set, the Bishop of Durham, and Lady Cremorne, were the last, both ninety-four: of your period, (alas, poor H. Thornton!) there remain yourself, (to me a host) the Gisbornes, the Babingtons, my old accomplished friend, now new neighbour, the Bishop of Bristol, &c. &c. Do not say you have nothing to do in your retirement from public life; yes, my dear friend, I can point out to you an employment, not less important than those in which you spent so many laborious days and nights. You *can*, and you must write the history of your own life; such a work would be sure to embrace three great classes of readers, the fashionable, the religious, and the political. You, who were so long the intimate friend of the first minister in the world, might introduce such a proportion of public and political remark, as would attract the worldly, who might thus be seduced to read the abundant instruction of the more serious pages. Thus they will meet with what will benefit their souls, while they look for nothing less. You say in your letter how much time you have lost by pausing too long, and making too much preparation before you begin to set about any thing. My fault is of a directly contrary character: in avoiding Scylla, I have fallen upon Charybdis; for I have such a horror of delay, that I called myself, and they now call me the ultra-anti-procrastinator. Though I have not done *much*, yet with a sickly

Digitized by Google

life, and an annual dangerous fever of long duration, which I have had till the last two years, if I had been sober and considerate, I should have done *nothing*. My thick volume, *Moral Sketches*, more than five hundred pages, was first thought of in January, entirely written, printed, and published at the end of August. In the September of the same year dear Patty died. Could I have foreseen this, or had I delayed the work, it would never have been written. I do not mean that it would have been any loss to the world, but that it would never have existed. So much in favour of rashness.

Do you know that I am very desirous of selling Barley Wood,—the reversion I mean. I have written to *my* friends to name it to *theirs*. I am unwilling to advertise, as it would bring strangers, and I do not like the publicity. Within the last two years, I have spent nearly a thousand pounds in enlarging and embellishing the grounds, and have put those and the house in complete repair. All the demands, both of family and charity, are so much enlarged, that I have exceeded my income in the last two years by £300. I have sunk a little from my 4 per cents; yet, as Pope says of Allen, 'it is pleasanter to give than to bequeath.' The worst is, that I am still alive, but though not in bad health, yet at eighty-two, I consider myself at the very verge of eternity, so that, though I must unavoidably lose by the sale, yet the purchaser must very soon become the possessor. My neighbour, Mrs. —— has just sold her place for ——, it is a nice place, but not to be

Digitized by Google

compared in point of scenery with mine, and has nearly four acres less land.

Ever your's,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Rev. T. Gisborne.

Barley Wood, Feb. 28, 1827.

My dear Sir,

You cannot conceive the gratification your very kind and interesting letter afforded me. It was connected with so many circumstances. It carried me back to my delightful visit to Yoxall; back to the evening, when having settled to leave it in the morning, you slipt into my hand a scrap of paper under the table at supper, with these words, 'you must not go to-morrow, it is your *duty* to stay;' the case was this, Dr. H. R—— was just arrived. Little did I think I was beginning a cordial friendship with that Bishop. Who is to have Bishop's Wearmouth? My old friend Paley amused me much with his account of taking possession of that place. Said he, 'I found a palace instead of the house of a private gentleman; but though I ran all over the house to find a place for a book, there was no such thing as a single shelf, closet, or corner.'

Poor Paley! I have survived almost all my former society. Your late Bishop was, I think, the last of my contemporaries: we were acquainted near fifty years. I seem to have survived scores of friends much younger and much healthier. I am now eighty-two years old, and

Digitized by Google

have had less interruption from sickness than at any period in my life, in the last two years. I have been setting down the names of all the physicians I have had; they amount to fifteen: not one survives! Should you and dear Mrs. G. visit Bath before I am removed hence, it would be a great delight to me if you would spare me a night. Many thanks for your valuable and highly useful little book. It is much liked. I have just received a present of my *own* little book from the continent, translated into French, with the title of '*L'Esprit de la Priere.*'

I never had so little leisure in my life, now that I ought to have the most. Letters which I cannot answer; applications that I cannot comply with; company that I cannot refuse. Pray tell Mrs. G. that now I have no head left, I work hard with my fingers, so that I am still of some little use, as my goods fetch a high price at all the numerous Bazaars; so you see I am alive to serve!

I have had lately a good deal of the valuable company of good Daniel Wilson; I have prevailed on him to preach four times at our church. Oh, that you would come and do the same! I, alas! have not been in a church, or down stairs, but once, for more than seven years.

I have had a very gratifying letter from Oxford, from Blanco White. Though I have long since left off the rhyming trade, yet I am prevailed on every year to give a few trumpery lines to the Bazaar; they bring a trifle to the charity. I enclose one for your young ones. I beg to be kindly remembered

Digitized by Google

to the female part of your now dispersed family. I have not scrawled so long a letter for a twelvemonth. I cannot look it over.

Ever affectionately yours,

H. More.

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.

1827.

My very dear Friends,

It is well Miss Frowd has left me only a little space, for I have little to say, and little time in which to say it; there are three littles for you; three greats (if there were such a word) would not more than express my affection for you both. I am going to give, for the second time this week, the most illustrious proof of a great soul,—of duty triumphing over self, that has been given in modern times. The first of these glorious victories was writing to put off D. W. from fulfilling his promise of coming over to us a second time; the other is to desire you will not come till Monday instead of Saturday.

It is not always that I set my conscience above my feelings, but you must encourage a young beginner in integrity and self-denial, and not think of being so base as to subtract these two days from your allotted visit; but let me have my fair tale. I have too many petty cares at that age when the grasshopper is a burthen. I have *many* grasshoppers, and seem to have less time and more labour than ever I had in the busiest periods of active life; and half my interruptions are of a paltry

Digitized by Google

kind—albums, and autographs, &c. Did I ever tell you that R—— I—— said to me, that if he were engaged to the prettiest woman in the world, he would break off the match if she kept an album? it is (said he) the essence of folly and vanity,—a vile way of seeming literary. He is a coarse man, but very clever.

The Dean of Salisbury, his wife, and son, passed three nights here: he preached two most awakening sermons at Wrington. I have had a heavy heart and weeping eyes; dear Mrs. Carrol has "entered into the joy of her Lord." She was gradually becoming disqualified for usefulness, yet her zeal lasted as long as her senses. Two more Bishops gone to their last audit! it is really striking and awful, and I hope will quicken the zeal of the survivors! When have I written so long a scrawl! I am sorry to send you so many papers, but I am half distracted at the daily applications which I do not trouble you with naming. One is often tempted to wish one had but £60. a year, to buy bread and cheese; and then perhaps they would leave me to pursue my narrow way in quiet! And now this is to certify, and by these presents you are certified, that you shall be met at Bulgin's at two of the clock on Monday, by my coachman, with his leathern convenience. I commend you to God and the word of his grace! May we meet in health and peace if it be his blessed will!

Ever yours, while

H. More.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to Sir Edmund Hartopp.

Barley Wood, May 9, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR EDMUND,

My heart has ached for you and your dear Lady. I have forborne, however, to express the deep sympathy I have felt, because I did not dare intrude upon the sabbath of your sorrows, which I considered as sacred. It is among the imperfections of human things, that while we can feel so much for the afflictions of our friends, we cannot diminish them. I both admired and loved the inestimable treasure you have lost. It is a fresh illustration of Cowper's remark, that

'God moves in a mysterious way.'

A life so useful, a character so every way not merely amiable, but so very estimable, with all the means and the will to do so much good, and to be a blessing to all around her, taken away in the prime of her life and her usefulness;—this is a lesson more striking and awakening than a hundred sermons.

We know, my dear Sir, that the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right. Yet is it not among the secret things of God, that while this charming lady is taken from us so early, I, who am of so little use, am preserved through what Pope calls

'That long disease, my life,'

to my eighty-third year? I consider myself so much on the very verge of eternity, that having no one to succeed me in the house which I have built, and

Digitized by Google

the woods which I have planted, I have come to a resolution to sell the reversion of Barley Wood if I can. The purchaser will soon become the inhabitant if he likes it. Being pretty well just now, I hope I shall have the honour and pleasure of showing you and Lady Hartopp how much it is enlarged and improved, though I have not walked round it for eight years; and of assuring you that I am, with the highest respect and esteem,

My dear Sir Edmund,
your very obliged, and very faithful,
humble servant,
H. More.

It has already appeared that Mrs. More had become desirous of disposing of the reversion of Barley Wood, but an event now took place which made it necessary for her to part with the possession.

Under a system of excessive tolerance and indulgence, virtue loses something of its value and reward; and of this species of tacit injustice and indirect mischief to morality, Mrs. More's memory must suffer the imputation. To bestow confidence, where experience should awaken suspicion and inspire caution, is to sleep on duty; and although age and infirmity, seconded by a gentle temperament, might plead her excuse with society for the facility with which she exposed herself to be ill-treated, yet it must be owned, that when her sound understanding had health and strength for their allies, she discovered too little of that vigilant exactness so essential to the equity and consistency of moral

Digitized by Google

rule. Her domestic government was such as might be expected from one whose reluctance to offend, or even to displease, was too apt to disarm her prudence; and when the ill effects of this amiable weakness, which at the age of eighty-three had nature on its side, were evident in the waste and misconduct of her servants, after trying in vain to correct the evil by mild remonstrance, she sank quietly under what seemed inevitable, and determined to take the infliction as a chastisement to which it was her duty to submit, without struggle and without complaint. At length, however, such discoveries were made, as induced her friends to represent to her the danger of her appearing to be a patroness of vice; or at least indifferent to its progress; and thereby, of lessening the beneficial influence of which her writings had hitherto been productive. The thought of such a consequence made her forget her age and infirmity. She took the decided resolution of quitting for ever her Barley Wood, the retreat in which all that had been most dear to her on earth—her happy Christian sisterhood—had taken sweet counsel together with her for so many years, and breathed their parting breaths in spiritual trust and triumph. All her domestics, who had so long felt and abused her goodness, were cashiered, and at a bleak season of the year, and on an inclement day, after a long confinement to her chamber, with her self-sacrificing and faithful friend who had kept close to her in all her distress, she removed to Clifton. From her apartment she was attended by several of the principal gentlemen of the

Digitized by Google

neighbourhood, who had come to her that morning to protect her from the approach of any thing that might discompose her. She descended the stairs with a placid countenance, and walked silently for a few minutes round the lower room, the walls of which were covered with the portraits of all her old and dear friends, who had successively gone before her; and as she was helped into the carriage, she cast one pensive parting look upon her bowers, saying, 'I am driven like Eve out of Paradise; but not, like Eve, by angels.'

A few lines written during the struggle and suspense of the first discovery, from Barley Wood, to two beloved friends who had a considerable share in extricating her from her distressing situation, cannot but be interesting.

From Mrs. H. More to the Miss Roberts's.[1]

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

If I were to write to you as often as I have some new service to thank you for, I should be always writing, and you always reading. I have been quite overwhelmed with this heavy blow. I strive and fervently pray for divine support and direction; but such is the variety of difficulties which await me for the next month, that I sink under the thought. I bless God I slept last night, but like the disciples, it was from sorrow;

[1] These ladies, so long the bosom friends of Mrs. More, were, of course, in constant correspondence with her, but their letters to Mrs. More have not been introduced into this work, from an unwillingness in the Editor to obtrude upon the public any persons standing in such near connexion with himself.

Digitized by Google

my kind partner in these sufferings, Miss Frowd, is, I am grieved to say, in bed with a sad cold; this adds much to my distress. You *must* indeed, my dear friends, you *must* come to advise which of the painful paths before me I must pursue. I shall break my heart, if you refuse this my perhaps, last request. I would consult with you what gentlemen I shall get to stay with me in the dreaded moment of separation. The shocking conduct of the people below, it seems, has been long the subject of discourse with the whole neighbourhood. I alone was left in ignorance through false kindness. I am more obliged to dear Mr. Harford, than I can say; he is a true Christian friend, and the station he fills gives authority to his judgment. He has so many engagements on his hands, that I avoid troubling him continually with letters, though he always most kindly attends to them. I really think this shock has hurt my hearing and my memory!

Your's my dearest friends,

Most affectionately,

H. More.

Resentment, however, could find no hospitality in her breast; it was speedily dislodged; and if the thought of her late unworthy household occurred to her mind, it merely led her to pray that they might be brought to repentance. 'People exclaim' said she, 'against their ingratitude towards *me*, but it is their sinfulness towards *God* that forms the melancholy part of the case!'

Digitized by Google

The habitual contentedness of her disposition made her easily accommodate herself to her new residence, to the beauties of which she soon became thankfully alive; nor was she less so to the affectionate assiduity with which all her friends gathered round her; or to the numerous attentions which they were eager to pay her. She fixed her abode on Windsor Terrace, in Clifton.

In one of her playful moments she drew up the following list, in commemoration of the kind attention she received from so many quarters.

'*Sketch of my Court at Windsor Terrace.* 1828.

The Duke of Gloucester, Sir Thomas Acland, Sir Edmond Hartopp, and Mr. Harford, my sportsmen. Mr. Battersby, Mr. Pigott, and Mrs. Addington, my fruiterers. Mrs. Walker Gray, my confectioner. Mr. Edward Brice, my fishmonger. Dr. Carrick, my state physician and zealous friend. Mrs. La Touche, my silk mercer and clothier. Bishop of Salisbury, my oculist. Miss Roberts's, my counsellors, *not* solicitors; for they give more than they take. Miss Davids' my old friends and new neighbours. Messrs. Hensman and Elwin, my spiritual directors. Mr. Wilberforce, my guide, philosopher, and friend. Miss Frowd, my domestic chaplain, secretary, and house apothecary, knitter, and lamp-lighter, missionary to my numerous and learned seminaries, and without controversy, the queen of clubs.[1] Mr. Huber, my incomparable translator, who, by his superiority, puts the original

[1] In allusion to the village clubs which had been set on foot by Mrs. More.

Digitized by Google

out of countenance. Mr. Cadell, accoucheur to the Muses, who has introduced many a sad sickly brat to see the light, but whispers that they must not depend on a long life!'

The influx of visitors, which poured in upon her, was now perfectly overwhelming and bewildering, till she was persuaded by the friends more immediately about her, to reserve two fixed days in every week to herself for quiet and calm recollection.

In the mean time she gradually contracted her earthly concerns into as small a compass as possible. Her little estate of Barley Wood was disposed of to William Harford, Esq. the brother of her much esteemed friend the possessor of Blaise Castle; and she shortly afterwards negociated with her bookseller the sale of the copyright of the last portion of her works, comprehending ten volumes. Their sale had continued so steady as to afford a constant increase to her income, which overplus she laid up in no earthly treasury; and her expenditure being no longer unduly increased by fraud and peculation, she found herself able to send forth the streams of her bounty more abundantly than ever; and this she did with an unsparing hand, her whole heart seeming to be set on "devising liberal things." There was something indeed of excess on this side of her character, which laid the foundation for a report in distant quarters, that the source of her charity was dried up, and that great pecuniary losses had caused her abrupt removal from Barley Wood.

Digitized by Google

She received a letter full of affectionate condolence from one of her excellent transatlantic friends, suggesting every pious motive for acquiescence in her change of circumstances, and conveying an intimation that her American admirers would gladly unite in helping to form a fund sufficient to preserve her from all fear of future pecuniary difficulties.

It has been mentioned, that one of her American friends had told her that her 'Hints for the Education of a Young Princess,' was the only one of her works which was excluded from publication in his country, their republican principles making them adverse to everything connected with royalty; but she was now informed that they had at length adopted it as a generally useful work, upon which she exclaimed 'I have conquered America!'

Digitized by Google

MEMOIRS.

PART V.

FROM THE YEAR 1828 TO A. D. 1833.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PART V.

CHAPTER V.

THE period of Mrs More's departure from Barley Wood and settlement at Clifton may be considered as the close of her literary, active, and intellectual life. It was an affecting incident. The place she had left, never to return to it, had grown up into great beauty, partly under her own superintendence, and partly under the care of those whose memory had taken root in the soil. Much of what was best and most approved in character, worth, and station, was associated with the recollections by which that retreat had been in a manner consecrated.

But on the other hand the painful discoveries which had been made at this place, of ingratitude and baseness in those whom her bounty had so long fed and fostered, had, it is to be presumed,

Digitized by Google

somewhat diminished its attraction; so that upon the whole there was but little cause of regret in adopting a change which the helplessness and infirmities of age had rendered expedient.

It has been observed that this removal from Barley Wood was an affecting incident; but it was as instructive as it was affecting. It was an incident, all the circumstances of which bore testimony to the strength and patience of a mind which no temporal cross or discomfort could subdue. Surrounded by domestics in whom she could no longer confide, and fully aware of her danger, for some time before she was extricated from it, her deportment betrayed neither fretfulness nor alarm. The boon of a most patient temper, still further tranquillized by religious trust, sustained her at an elevation far above the reach of ordinary vexations.

The house on Windsor Terrace to which Mrs. More was now removed, was an elegant and convenient residence, within a few doors of her most intimate and affectionate friends, and in the neighbourhood of many who had made a part of her society for a considerable period: nor let it be forgotten that she had still in Miss Frowd the same companion to whose voluntary and affectionate assiduity we find so many grateful allusions in her letters.

Her change of place had little of the shock of transition. There was nothing strange or novel in the new scene. She was brought back to terminate her pilgrimage where her career of usefulness had begun. The vicinity of Bristol had so

Digitized by Google

long been a witness and participator of her virtues, so long identified with her fame and glory, that one could not have seen her living elsewhere without looking upon the removal as akin to one of those dislocations which are produced by a convulsion of nature. It is in that vicinity that she has left so many monuments of her benevolence. There the schools and public institutions of charity are so many living and lasting records of her compassionate feelings and social sympathies.

To this neighbourhood, from which, as the starting post of her brilliant course, she had set out some sixty years before, with the whispers of conscious power urging her forward in a career of publicity from which the modesty and moderation of her disposition shrunk back with trembling, she came at last, her race being ended, to receive a victor's reward in that peace which speaks comfort to the weary soul, and follows it to the land of the saint's inheritance, where there is quietness and assurance for ever.

But it pleased Providence to lengthen out a little the last scene of her existence, that as it had been seen in her how a godly woman could live, both in the world and above it, so in her it might be seen how gracefully a godly woman could pass out of it into a better.

Soon after her fixing her abode at Clifton, it was remarked by her more intimate friends, with that sadness of feeling with which we always see, in the case of an eminently gifted person, the approach of the great leveller, that her memory had begun

Digitized by Google

to serve her less faithfully, and to betray her into repetitions and mistakes. Still her vivacity maintained a long contest with decaying nature; and though her powers were less uniform, they sparkled occasionally with their accustomed brilliance; and even her wit would sometimes resume its seat to the surprise of those who were looking daily for the escape of her spirit.

It must be confessed, however, that as her valuable life drew towards its end, her mind partook more and more of the general decay; and that for some time previous to her departure she was unfit, though unconscious of her unfitness, to receive the visits of homage, respect, or curiosity which continued to flow in upon her. But her philanthrophy, which she had always indulged to an extent almost bordering on excess, made it an uneasy effort for her to refuse admittance to any visitor; and however expedient it was to spare her these excitements, this comparative seclusion was neither wholly agreeable to herself nor satisfactory to others. But it was considered by her medical advisers as absolutely necessary to the preservation of her existence.

The remission of intellectual labour, however essential it may be at a late period of life to the support of the animal frame, opens an escape to the stores of memory, and accelerates the decline of mental energy. To preserve the faculties from decay, as years increase, is not within the power of perishing mortality; but to protract the date of their use and efficiency is more or less the

Digitized by Google

effect of a perseverance which keeps them in a constant and equitable exercise, at a middle point between exertion and quiescence. From the earliest age at which the faculties usually attain to their maturity, to a very late period of her life, Mrs. More had kept her mind, if not at the top of its bent, yet at a considerable stretch; and when her last long vacation from study and composition was entered upon, the retrograde course became more and more decided, till time completed the undoing of its own work, and dissolved the structure which long exercise and experience had raised to so lofty an elevation.

But it was not on every subject that the mind of this extraordinary woman could be said to have lost its energy, even when her last sickness had brought her to the verge of eternity. There was a theme on which it appeared to have gathered strength, so that it might be said that the force of her intellect was rather diverted than destroyed. While that side of her understanding which looked towards the world was dim and obscure, that which was turned towards heaven continued bright and lucid. She retained to the last an unclouded remembrance of the mercies of her heavenly Friend and Guide, as her single ground of hope and trust, through faith in the great sacrifice; and if a text from scripture was quoted to her for consolation, she would follow it out by applying it to herself, or respond to it with holy fervour in words borrowed from the same authentic source.

She had been brought up in two schools—the

Digitized by Google

school of the world, and the school that calls us out of it. In the early part of her course, the world's vanities and flatteries had got the start of better counsels, and somewhat engrossed her for a time; but her principles remained sound, and concentrating themselves in the recesses of her bosom, waited there for the quickening influence of those truths which come with a mysterious vocation to the hearts of some, showing them to themselves as the heirs of corruption, and the pupils of grace,—beset with numberless perils, and having one only way of escape. The learning of the latter school, long before age or infirmity had imposed their interdicts, had brought this eminent lady entirely under its discipline, and armed her for those frequent conflicts in which she became a conqueror through Him, who, by the trials and exercises of affliction, fulfils his purposes of preparation and reward.

Her learning in this school was turned all to profit. There was no waste of intellect in fruitless research. Her religion was all text; at once compendious and comprehensive,—in its creed a span long, but in its moral dimensions as large as life and all its charities. That which gives wisdom to the simple, gave simplicity to her wisdom. It was always in preparation, and ready for use. Her confession of faith, as gathered from her declarations, her practice, and her correspondence was this—that God wrought *for* her by the blood of his atonement, *in* her by the operation of his Spirit, and *around* her by the manifestations of his Providence; —the benefit of which mysterious agency was to

Digitized by Google

be sought by prayer, faith, and penitence. This seemed to be the sum and substance of her theology; which, like its founder, had no form or comeliness, after the fashion of the world's glory, and approved itself to those only in whose hearts the truth, in its simplicity, was acknowledged and embraced.

Mrs. More came to reside on Windsor Terrace, on the 18th of April, 1828, at the age of eighty-three, where she lived in Christian composure to the 7th of September, 1833, a period of five years and a half. The reader will be helped to some idea of her average mental capacity during the first four years of her residence at Clifton, from the age of eighty-three to eighty-seven, from the following letters, the first written in the month of October, 1828, the others in 1829 and 1830.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. Wilberforce.

Windsor Terrace, October 27, 1828.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I cannot express the immense joy your most welcome letter gave me. It is delightful to think we shall meet once more on this side Jordan. I am diminishing my worldly cares. I have sold Barley Wood, and have just parted with the copyright to Cadell, of those few of my writings which I had not sold him before. I have exchanged eight 'pampered minions,' for four sober servants. I have greatly lessened my house expenses, which enables me to maintain my schools, and enlarge

Digitized by Google

my charities. My schools alone, with clothing, rents, &c. cost me £250. a year. Dear good Miss Frowd looks after them, though we are removed much farther from them. The squire of Cheddar attends them for almost the whole of Sunday, and keeps and sends me an accurate statement of merits and wants; so that I have many comforts.

As I have sold my carriage and horses, I want no coachman; as I have no garden, I want no gardener. My removal here has been providentially directed to my good. I have two pious clergymen, whom I call my chaplains, and who frequently devote an evening to expound and pray with my family, uniformly on Saturdays. My most kind and skilful physician, Dr. Carrick, who used to have twelve miles to come to me, has now not much above two hundred yards. I found this a great comfort lately, when he attended me every day, sometimes twice, for a strange complaint—a total deficiency of bile. By the blessing of God on his skill, I am nearly recovered; but am still left to feed on drugs. As to your kind visit, we can give you two beds, and one for a female servant; I am sorry I can do no more. The house, though good, furnishes few conveniences. We have no servant's hall, of course no second table; but we are surrounded with hotels, lodging-houses, &c. I am expecting soon to see my much-valued friend Mr. Huber and his wife, from Geneva. He is a man of great talents and piety. I owe him much—he has translated many of my works into French, and is now going on with the 'Essay on St. Paul.' It

Digitized by Google

gratifies me that his translation of the 'Spirit of Prayer, is now circulating in Paris. I have just received a valuable work from Madame Necker de Saussure. Miss Frowd desires her best respects. She is my great earthly treasure. She joins to sincere piety, great activity and useful knowledge. She has the entire management of my family, and is very judicious in the common offices of life. She reads well, and she reads much to me. I have much more to say, and much, I trust, to hear when we meet. May the God of all grace and goodness preserve you, my dear friend,

Fervently prays,

HANNAH MORE.

From Mrs. H. More to Mr. and Mrs. Huber.

January 14, 1829.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS,

I believe the inclosed trumpery lines are what you desired; and trumpery as they are, is there any command of yours I would not obey, or any wish, however insignificant, I would not gratify?

I do not like these *prendre congés*, as they indicate the loss I am soon to sustain. If I were to repeat the acts of kindness you have bestowed on unworthy me, my paper would not contain them. I hardly dare expect to see you this side Jordan, but we can pray for each other. Miss Frowd joins in kind regards with, my very dear friends,

Your ever obliged, faithful, and affectionate,

H. MORE.

Digitized by Google

COWPER'S POEMS—VOL. I. PAGE 19.

Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,
Beset with every ill but that of fear;
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplext,
Once Chatham saved thee, but who saves thee next?

I ADD,

'Who saves? Again the glorious trophy's won,
For Chatham's name is lost in Chatham's son;
To him the muse a loftier praise shall yield,
A sword was Chatham—Pitt both sword and shield!

Mrs. H. More to a Friend.

1829.

We are all agitation and confusion about the Oxford business. I tell my friends they must be all alive. The interest of our church and our country is at stake. We have just got your note, and the printed paper. Send down by coach at least a dozen of the same, and I will disperse them among all who are likely to turn them to a good account. I did not expect to see the king surrounded by a half Protestant ministry; had it been Turkish or Jewish, I might have put up with it. My dear and able friends, the Miss Roberts's and Miss Frowd are running about like mad folks; and I am not over sound. My duty as well as love to the champion of Protestantism. God bless you all,

H. MORE.

Digitized by Google

To a friend on the Oxford election of 1829.

Joy, joy, joy to you, to me! Joy to the individual victorious Protestant! Joy to the great Protestant cause! I have been almost out of my wits ever since I received your delightful letter, in which insanity my dear colleague Miss Frowd joined me. That dear valuable Sir T. Acland brought the first news of a great majority; and though I could scarcely doubt of our success, yet I applied the words once used to me by my old friend Dr. Johnson, 'My dear, I must always doubt of that which has not yet happened.'

Nothing short of this great event could have induced me to hold a pen. I have been confined to my bed, and still am, by a severe cough and cold. My good doctor attends me daily, and rejoices in our joy, but he would scold me for writing. I cannot answer the earlier part of your letter, not being sufficiently stout to say more than that I am,

Your ever affectionate,

H. More.

From Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent to Mrs. H. More.

Kensington Palace, June 25, 1830.

Madam,

I have received this day your note of the twenty-second, and your work which accompanied it.

I hasten to assure you that I have received with

Digitized by Google

great pleasure the books *direct* from you. It will gratify you to hear, I am sure, that the princess received them some years ago from the late most excellent Bishop of Salisbury; and I have much satisfaction in adding, that I am most deeply impressed with the value of the books.

I remain always, Madam,
Yours very sincerely,
VICTORIA.

Her last letter was addressed to one of her most valued friends, who must forgive the mention here made of his kind and effectual services, in facilitating and protecting the removal of this aged and ill-requited benefactress of the poor, from the place where every breeze whispered her charities, and every cottage was warmed by her benevolence, with a frame as little fit for a journey, as it was for war, to her new abode; where every local reminiscence was to be dispersed, and the thread which held in continuity the texture of her interests and affections was to be broken. Of this gentleman's friendship, and particularly his prompt and timely aid in the moment when, without the kindest and most judicious treatment, she must have sunk under the infliction, she always expressed herself with the liveliest gratitude.

The letter alluded to as being one of the last from her pen, was written to acknowledge a present of a book which she had received from this friend.

Digitized by Google

From Mrs. H. More to a Friend.

7th May, 1832, *(88th year of her age.)*

MY DEAR AND TOO KIND FRIEND,

If you could look into my heart, you would see more pleasure and gratitude at one peep, than you would find in a whole folio full of elaborate compliment. I am delighted with, and I hope edified by, your highly-finished work. I am enchanted to find powerful reasoning and profound reflections so frequently diversified by the brilliant, the sprightly, and the gay. The work is at once Christian and classical.

I remain, your's sincerely,

H. MORE.

An extract from a letter written by Mrs. More's long-attached and highly-valued friend and physician, Dr. Carrick, of Clifton, will very suitably bring us to the close of her long and Christian life.

From Dr. Carrick to the Editor.

Clifton, Dec. 30, 1833.

From the time Mrs. More removed from Barley Wood to Clifton, in the spring of 1828, her health was never otherwise than in a very uncertain and precarious state, and she seldom continued beyond a few days exempt from some attack of greater or less severity. Yet although so frequently suffering from disease, she was but seldom, during the five

Digitized by Google

years and a half she lived at Clifton, subjected to such violent inflammatory seizures as those she had sustained at Barley Wood; from which she had escaped with extreme difficulty, and altogether contrary to reasonable expectation. At all periods of her life, Mrs. More had been liable to dangerous inflammatory affections of the chest; and during her latter years, it seemed always improbable that she would be able to survive another such attack. The anxiety of her friends was therefore peculiarly awakened for her safety during the winter season, and every possible precaution was employed to obviate the recurrence of catarrhal affection, by which it seemed most probable she would ultimately be carried off. By the unremitting care and attention, chiefly of her attached and judicious friend, Miss Frowd, this principal cause of alarm and anxiety had been in a great measure warded off or essentially mitigated during several successive winters, and especially in the last, that of 1831—2. About the middle of November, however, of 1832, some degree of catarrhal affection, without any assignable cause, supervened, which gradually extended to the chest, in the usual form of bronchites in elderly persons, although milder perhaps in appearance than on some former occasions.

Towards the end of November, these catarrhal symptoms seemed to be giving way, when, during the night of the 26th of that month, a considerable degree of bewilderment, or mild delirium, was observed to supervene, which continued with only occasional remission or abatement to the termination of her life, about ten months afterwards.

Digitized by Google

For some time previous to the period alluded to, it was apparent to those who had frequent opportunities of seeing Mrs. More, that her intellectual energy was gradually undergoing a process of deterioration and decay; imperceptibly indeed from day to day, but sufficiently obvious at longer intervals. Towards the end of the year 1832, a still more considerable falling off, both in her mental and bodily powers, was observed to take place. Whether the severe illness and death of her respected and excellent friend, Miss Roberts, had a decided influence on Mrs. More's state of health, I would not venture to say; but it certainly was about the period of that melancholy event, the latter end of September, that a very marked deterioration of her faculties became observable; but it was not till about two months afterwards, the 26th of November, that her intellectual powers sustained their last and greatest shock, upon the translation, as it seemed, of morbid action from the chest to the head. From that period her symptoms underwent but little alteration. A slight or moderate degree of fever continued slowly to waste her strength. The catarrhal symptoms, however, did not recur. About a fortnight before her death, her appetite for food, which had hitherto been sufficient for her condition, suddenly failed, and a total rejection of nourishment led unavoidably to the termination of her lengthened struggle.

For the space of a week or more, she scarcely seemed to recognize those about her, with the exception of perhaps one or two individuals. The

Digitized by Google

last day, the 7th of September, she did not speak, but without any painful or convulsive effort, quietly and placidly ceased to breathe.

To the friends and admirers of Mrs. Hannah More, it was painful during her latter years to see those great and brilliant talents, which had justly raised her to the highest pinnacle of celebrity, descending to the level of more ordinary persons. Yet there was this consoling circumstance in the case of this admirable woman; that while the grand and vigorous qualities of her mind submitted to decay, the good, the kind, the beneficent, suffered no diminution nor abatement, to the last moment of consciousness. Age, which of necessity shrinks and impairs the bodily powers, generally blunts sensibility, and narrows the social virtues. The soul which in youth, and in the prime of life, teemed with every liberal and benevolent quality, is not unfrequently observed to grow cold and insensible, parsimonious, and even avaricious, when sinking into the grave. With this remarkable woman it was signally the reverse. Her well-known beneficent and charitable qualities, not only suffered no abatement, but expanded with her years.

So long as her intellectual faculties remained but moderately impaired, her wonted cheerfulness and playfulness of disposition did not forsake her; and at no period of her declining life did an impatient or querulous expression escape her lips, even in moments of painful suffering.

During her latter years indeed, it was her constant and ardent wish that she might be per-

Digitized by Google

mitted to quit that terrestrial stage, on which she considered she had finished her destined part; but this desire did not proceed from impatience to escape from mortal suffering, but solely from her anxiety to enter on that state of blessed immortality, to which she aspired with humble confidence in the merits of her Redeemer,—an anxiety at all times qualified and subdued by an entire and willing submission to the divine decrees: "Not my will, but thine be done!"

It seems worthy of remark, that as it pleased the Almighty to protect this distinguished woman to a very advanced period of life, from the infirmities of temper, which often tend to render age both unamiable and unhappy, so it likewise accorded with his goodness to spare her from many of those bodily infirmities, which usually accompany length of years. To the very last her eye was not dim; she could read with ease, and without spectacles, the smallest print. Her hearing was almost unimpaired; and until very near the close of life, her features were not shrunk, nor wrinkled, nor uncomely, and her person retained to a considerable degree its wonted appearance, as at a much earlier period. Even to the last, her death-bed was attended with few of the pains and infirmities which are almost inseparable from sinking nature.

It has been my fortune, during a long and close intercourse with mankind, to have enjoyed many and valuable opportunities of observing and studying the human character, under various and trying circumstances; but never, I can say with truth,

Digitized by Google

have I known a character in all respects so perfect, as that of Mrs. Hannah More.

I remain,
Very truly and respectfully your's,
A. CARRICK.

It has already been observed that as the life of Hannah More approached its termination, her thoughts often travelled to far distant scenes, and seemed sometimes to be lost in visions of eternity. The forces that kept the citadel seemed to be gradually disappearing, except those clear thoughts and holy certainties which still sustained her spirits, and suffered neither sadness nor distrust to intrude upon her last hours. Amidst all her wanderings she was coherent and consistent on whatever had an immediate relation to the place to which she was going.

'Upon one occasion,' says the faithful friend who was always about her dying bed, 'in the early part of her illness, I read to her the office for the visitation of the sick, and the burial service in the Book of Common Prayer. She was still and engaged, while I was reading, with her hands clasped in devotion. Some of the verses in the Psalms, after I had begun them, she would finish, exclaiming with rapture, 'how beautiful, how sweet—delighting the taste and touching the heart.' The fifty-first Psalm was continually on her lips: "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

Digitized by Google

When the prison doors were open, and her soul was on the point of escaping to its true home, though a thick veil was spread over the world she was leaving, no look of regret, but one of sweet sympathy with its trials and sorrows, was often cast behind her; nor could the awful change which awaited her, dislodge from her heart that love of souls which had supported her through so many years of bodily suffering, in her various works of Christian beneficence. Prayer was the last thing that lived in her,—every breath was prayer; and in the vital energy of her expiring petitions, her affectionate friends and those that administered to her wants, and soothed her last conflict, were earnestly commended to the great Advocate of repentant sinners. The lady who had long taken such kind care of her, and was kneeling at the bed's side, was thus addressed by her shortly before her departure: 'I love you, my dear child, with fervency. It will be pleasant to you twenty years hence to remember that I said this on my death-bed. Be near me, and with me as much as you can, will you? I may last out a few days—how long does the Doctor think I shall live?' 'She was always,' says this lady, 'bestowing blessings on those around her, and hoping they should meet in a happier world—in an eternal and glorious world;' and when she was told of some presents made in her name to those who were employed in her service, with a smile almost amounting to a laugh, she exclaimed. 'I am glad of it, glad of it.' Adverting to her own frame of spirit, she said, 'I hope my

Digitized by Google

temper is not peevish, or troublesome.' And on being answered that it was the temper of an angel, she said, 'Oh no, not of an angel! but of a very highly-favoured servant of the Lord, my Saviour.'

The Psalms, and other passages of Scripture were perpetually breaking from her lips, and it seemed extraordinary to those who were about her, that her memory, which had let almost every terrestrial impression slip away, had kept the registry of her devout recollections unobliterated and unimpaired. The loins of her mind were girded up, and her soul braced as it were to meet without amazement the strange and awful encounter which was approaching. Like one preparing for a great expedition, all impediments were thrown aside, all but the necessary implements to set up her tabernacle in the place of her destination and final rest.

'She was sometimes,' says Miss Frowd, 'painfully conscious of the disturbed and confused state of her mind. One day she put her hand to her head, and exclaimed, 'I am all confusion, I seem quite to have lost my understanding. My mind is all so (shaking her hand before her eyes); I used to entertain my friends and be agreeable to them. But if I shed tears, they are tears of gratitude, and from a sense of my unworthiness.'

The philosophical reader, when he contemplates this buoyancy of hope and trust amidst the languors of a last sickness, at an age verging on fourscore years and ten, will find a difficulty in accounting for it by any analogies of nature; and if he is determined to see nothing supernatural in it, he must be content

Digitized by Google

to sit down in ignorance and wonder; but to the Christian inquirer the phenomenon will shew itself under another aspect: he will see and adore in it the Spirit's work and the succours of Divine help; he will see in it the process of a second birth in a dying child of Adam; he will see in it the funeral of death, its sting extracted, the grave spoiled, and Satan discomfited; he will find in it the best comment upon the Psalmist's exclamation, "Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

To save space, we lay before our Christian readers the sentences which escaped from her lips at intervals during the latter portions of her last illness, requesting them not to forget that at this period she had arrived at her eighty-ninth year. They were committed to writing by one[1] who dearly prized her posthumous honour for the sake of the generation which has succeeded her; but whom neither this nor any other consideration could ever have induced to dress up her sentiments in any other idiom than her own. Plain as it was, it was the vehicle of her last earnest pleadings with her merciful and awful Judge.

She said to those who surrounded her—"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 'Jesus is all in all, God of grace, God of light, God of love. Whom have I in heaven but thee?' When very sick she said, 'What can I do? What can I *not* do with Christ. I know that my Redeemer liveth. Happy, happy are those who are expecting to be together in a better world. The

[1] The survivor of the two Miss Roberts's.

Digitized by Google

thought of that world lifts the mind above itself. My God! my God! I bless thy holy name. Oh the love of Christ, the love of Christ. Mercy, Lord, is all I ask! I am never tired of prayer. Pray, pray, that the dear mistress of this house may be supported in her last hours. I pray to God to forgive my many offences, to make me humble, and looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Lord stablish, strengthen us! "The heavens declare the glory of God,"—how I love that Psalm! O eternal, immortal Lord, I prostrate myself before thee, utterly unworthy of thy mercy! Holy Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit! into thy hands I commend my unworthy self—unworthy but penitent!' Upon being asked if any thing could be done to make her more comfortable, she said 'nothing, but love me, and forgive me when I am impatient.' Upon her servant's proposing to read a chapter to her, she said, 'What are you going to read?' and upon being told the resurrection of Christ, she said, 'If we meet at his feet we shall be equal!' She said to her attendant, who had been repeating some psalms and hymns, 'You cannot have your mind too much stored with these things; when you get old, or are in solitude, they will supply you with comfort.' After repeating the Doxology, she said to her servant, 'the word Trinity you know means three. I once lived in a street called Trinity Street; I do think it very wrong to give such sacred names to common things.' She often exclaimed, 'Lord, have mercy upon me: Christ, have mercy upon me, and make me patient under my sufferings. Take away

Digitized by Google

my perverse and selfish spirit, and give me a conformity to thy will. May thy will be done in me, and by me, to thy praise and glory: I desire only to be found at the foot of the cross. Lord! I am thine, I am not my own, I am bought with a price, a precious price, even the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord have mercy upon me, grant me an abundant entrance into thy kingdom! Jesus my Saviour and my friend.' She talked much of the many mercies of God to her, through her very long life. To an intimate friend she said, she hoped they should meet in glory; for herself she had but one object in view, and that was to wait the Lord's time. 'Lord! strengthen my resignation to thy holy will. Lord! have mercy upon me a miserable sinner. Thou hast not left me comfortless. Oh Lord! strengthen me in the knowledge of my Saviour Jesus Christ, whom I love and honour. How many parts of Scripture speak of the necessity of our being born again! Raise my desires, purify my affections, sanctify my soul. To go to heaven—think what *that* is! To go to my Saviour, who died that I might live. Lord, humble me, subdue every evil temper in me. May we meet in a robe of glory; through Christ's merits alone can we be saved! Look down, O Lord, upon thy unworthy servant with eyes of compassion.' A friend said to her, 'Our good works will not save us,' she said, 'Our good works are nothing, but without them we cannot be saved. You must pray for me, that my sins may be forgiven me for Christ's sake.' After repeating the 51st Psalm, she said, 'Pour out

Digitized by Google

such a measure of thy grace upon me, that I may be enabled to serve thee in spirit, soul, and body, and that loving thee, I may come unto thee through Jesus Christ. Oh, my Saviour, forsake not her whom thou hast redeemed.' Feeling herself lingering long in her sickness, she said to a friend, 'My dear, do people never die? Oh glorious grave! I pray for those I love, and for those I pity and do not love.' She said, 'It pleases God to afflict me, not for his pleasure, but to do me good, to make me humble and thankful; Lord, I believe, I *do* believe with all the powers of my weak sinful heart. Lord Jesus, look down upon me from thy holy habitation, strengthen my faith, and quicken me in my preparation! Support me in that trying hour when I most need it! It is a glorious thing to die!' When one talked to her of her good deeds, she said, 'Talk not so vainly, I utterly cast them from me, and fall low at the foot of the cross.'

The gradual dissolution and departure of this gentle ornament of her sex, shall be described in the natural and affecting language of the friend who cheered and comforted her last days and her last hours, and counted the last beat of her pulse. 'During this illness of ten months, the time was past in a series of alternations between restlessness and composure, long sleeps, and long wakefulness, with occasional great excitement, elevated and sunken spirits. At length, nature seemed to shrink from further conflict, and the time of her deliverance drew near. On Friday, the 6th of September, 1833, we offered up the morning family devotion

Digitized by Google

by her bed-side: she was silent, and apparently attentive, with her hands devoutly lifted up. From eight in the evening of this day, till nearly nine, I sat watching her. Her face was smooth and glowing. There was an unusual brightness in its expression. She smiled, and endeavouring to raise herself a little from her pillow, she reached out her arms as if catching at something, and while making this effort, she once called, 'Patty,' (the name of her last and dearest sister,) very plainly, and exclaimed, 'Joy!' In this state of quietness and inward peace, she remained for about an hour. At half-past nine o'clock, Dr. Carrick came. The pulse had become extremely quick and weak. At about ten, the symptoms of speedy departure could not be doubted. She fell into a dozing sleep, and slight convulsions succeeded, which seemed to be attended with no pain. She breathed softly, and looked serene. The pulse became fainter and fainter, and as quick as lightning. It was almost extinct from twelve o'clock, when the whole frame was very serene. With the exception of a sigh or a groan, there was nothing but the gentle breathing of infant sleep. Contrary to expectation, she survived the night. At six o'clock on Saturday morning, I sent in for Miss Roberts. She continued till ten minutes after one, when I saw the last gentle breath escape; and one more was added "to that multitude which no man can number, who sing the praises of God and of the Lamb for ever and ever."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THUS ended the long life of this distinguished lady; not the last, I trust, of the female worthies of this land, but one who more, perhaps, than any other, carried in her opinions, habits, and predilections the sample of a straight-minded, English woman, combining natural manners with polished breeding, home culture with elegant attainments, and preserving in an æra of revolutionary rage and moral bewilderment, a loyal heart, a regulated spirit, a simple faith, and a holy walk. A patriot, too, as much as a woman can be without purchasing the distinction at the price of qualities essential to the true relative place in society which the sex should maintain: Adding strength and safety to the moral foundations of liberty, by prudent teaching and example, and leaving it to the rougher sex to tread the doubtful path of speculative daring upon the thin border which separates between liberty and licentiousness.

Her love of her country, and her love of her species, were without any alloy of party feelings

Digitized by Google

or prejudices. To her sound and correct understanding, liberty presented itself as including among its essential constituents, loyalty, allegiance, security, and duty. Patriotism in this view of it should be placed in the front of her character, since it really took the lead of every other *temporal* object. All the powers of her mind were devoted to the solid improvement of society. Her aims were all practical; and it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to name a writer who has laid before the public so copious a variety of original thoughts and reasonings, without any admixture of speculation or hypothesis. To keep within this tangible barrier, without contracting the range of her imagination, or denying to truth any advantage to which it is fairly entitled, of illustration or entertainment, is a secret in the art of composition with which few, if any, have been so well acquainted. Her indefatigable pen was ever at work; kept in motion by a principle of incessant activity, never needing the refreshment of change; never weary in well-doing. Thus to do good and to distribute, was no less the work of her head than of her hand, and the rich and the great were among the objects of her charity. The specific relief of which they stood in need, she was ever forward to supply; and as she had passed so many of her earliest years among them, she knew well their wants, and how to administer to them. She was a woman of business in all the concerns of humanity, refined or common, special or general, and had a sort of righteous cunning in dealing with different cases; exposing without

Digitized by Google

irritating, reproving without discouraging, probing without wounding; always placing duty upon its right motives, and showing the perversity of error, by bringing it into close comparison with the loveliest forms of truth and godliness.

It was the privilege of her intellect to work successfully in the face of forbidding circumstances; such as in ordinary cases repress vigour, and slacken perseverance. In her early life, her powers of conversation led her into varied society, and principally into those assemblies where intellect is in the breath, and expires in evanescent displays, multiplying its ephemeral products to flutter and expire; where minds capable of things of lasting effect and extensive benefit, often lay out their strength in thoughts that do but gild the fugitive hour, and fade from the memory like the phantoms of a summer's cloud. Those who move amidst such fascinations, are seldom extensive contributors to the treasury of human knowledge. It was therefore the more remarkable, that Hannah More, during this part of her life, was actually accumulating, projecting, and accomplishing beneficial schemes and purposes; and as some rivers are said to pass through large receptacles of water without intermixture in their passage, and to roll onwards in their own course till their destination is completed,—in some such manner did this single-minded woman travel through this gay medium without disturbance or diversion, till in no long time she gained a clear and uninterrupted current, dispensing beauty and fertility throughout her beneficent progress.

Digitized by Google

The qualities of Mrs. More, considered absolutely, have been deservedly the object of her country's homage and admiration, but when regarded as actively contending with the false sentiments, new theories, and foreign fashions which have, within these last forty years, been gaining so fast upon us, the worth of her character becomes very conspicuous. He who has observed the traces of the old English mind gradually growing fainter as it recedes into the great limbo of forgotten things, will think with sadness of our common loss in the departure of a person of such influence and authority on the side of moderation, loyalty, high breeding, and honour, and all those things which belong to our national and homely habitudes. If Mr. Burke as a philosophical, and Mr. Pitt as a practical statesman, successfully resisted in their days the raving theories of revolutionary extravagance, Hannah More, as a moralist,—a scriptural moralist, standing in the old paths,—shared largely with them the glory of this conservative warfare.

She was always opposed in youth and in age to whatever in sentiment or practice carried the mind to a distance from the soberness of self-distrust, and the light and leading of Scripture. With the artillery of her plain truths and oracular common sense, she shook the arsenals of folly, and excited in the ranks of fashion, if not consternation, at least some of the sensations which belong to the shame of merited exposure. That wisdom was her's which uttereth her voice in the streets—that crieth at the gates, and at the entrance of the city. It was her

Digitized by Google

privilege in an extraordinary manner to compel attention. The harp and viol, the wheel and the forge were still, for an interval at least, to favour the voice of this charmer, charming so wisely. Her hints, her admonitions, and her remonstrances found their way every where, even where sprightlier moralists had been denied access. And all this was done without lowering the quality of religion, or disguising its interdicts with any arts of pleasing, or adventitious aids. Her moral writings, containing nothing but the pure ethics of the gospel, without anecdote, or ridicule, or satire, or any other superadded attraction but those of good composition and beautiful illustration, showed her to be in possession of the secret of gaining readers without cost or sacrifice on the side of truth or humanity, or any breach of the law of kindness.

On questions of party politics, she wrote and conversed but little; deeming them to be no proper part of a woman's province; but as far as she allowed herself to take a side in political contentions, she was thoroughly loyal and monarchical—of such principles as would have proclaimed her a staunch whig after the fashion of Lord Somers in his day. But in these days, when old things are shaken out of their places, and the notions and distinctions of a former period are lost in a crowd of new names and designations, so that the age of George the Third is falling fast into virtual obscurity, buried in a manner before it had ceased to breathe, it would be difficult to assign to Hannah More her proper political place among modern patriots or partizans.

Digitized by Google

The more things were shaken around her, or trembled under her, the firmer was the hold she took on the pillars of the temple, and in this position she maintained her integrity and consistency to the last, amidst the new aspects of the political and religious community; and though she was too candid and generous to renounce friendships on account of any honest change of opinion, she was too true to her own principles, and too sensible of the value of ancient institutions, not to deplore the growing contempt for things tried and approved. It may be that in some things her mind was over-strenuous, and her adherence and opposition too unqualified; and I know not whether the totality of her hatred of every thing French—of French morality, French politics, French philosophy, and French fashions, might not have bordered on excess; but her feeling for the maintenance of what was understood by 'the good old cause,' involving the great securities and pledges of social happiness and national prosperity, was such as to make every attempt at removing landmarks regarded by her with suspicion at least, if not with aversion.

On the concession of the claims of the Catholics to political power, whether right or wrong, her opinion was never altered. She always regarded it as the beginning of a succession of evil measures, which were gradually to change the whole face and character of our fundamental institutions, and turn the genius of the country towards objects of a disorganizing tendency. She considered Protestantism as the basis of our government, and she loved it

Digitized by Google

best in its connection with the character and discipline of the Church of England; but she could not move in correspondence with those eager men who were for reforming reformation, and measuring religious advancement by the length of its departure from the practice of the papal church. She was very liberal but very staunch; and although she could not but see that religious communities take up notions of each other's creed too much upon trust, and with too little forbearance and candour; yet, of a religion which professedly regards our church as polluted, and founded on usurpation, she considered it as not illiberal to be distrustful. She looked upon the alliance of church and state as founded upon nature rather than legislation; human societies being always in fact found in practical alliance with religion; and opinion, which is always at work, being itself determined and modelled by the secret influence of its mysterious and persuasive power. Such appears to have been her general views of this subject, as gathered from her works, her correspondence, and her conversation. It gave her considerable uneasiness to witness what she called the defection of some of her best friends, whose change of opinion on the question before the legislature, respecting the admission of the Roman Catholics to power, made a vacancy about this graceful pillar, which rendered its elevation more noble and conspicuous.

But the difference between them reached no further than the point to which it related; and it does not appear that any one of her intimate friendships, which were very numerous, and generally instruc-

Digitized by Google

tive and captivating from the light which played around them, and sparkled in her correspondence, were materially diminished or disturbed by these contrarieties of opinion. If at any time she entered into controversy, it was always an exercise of her charity, and a test of her self-control.

On her religious opinions, much need not be said. She was too pious to be a professed theologian, and too much in earnest for curious criticism, or speculative discussion. To make a right application of religious truth,—to bring it home to the conscience, and to be conformed to its precepts, was, she thought, our immediate concern with revelation, as soon as its great doctrines of redemption and grace were vitally apprehended. Having once received and understood the message in its awful import, instead of first considering how best to obey its commandments, and respond to its invitations, to begin an ingenious examination of its formal contents, the manner of its promulgation, its phraseology, and its partial obscurities, was, she thought, to mistake the design of the embassy, and the predicament in which it placed us. After saying this, it is almost needless to add that she was adverse to theological disputation. Wrapping herself up in a simple and humble belief, she went out to meet the accidents and storms of life, with a composure of mind, and a pious fortitude, which made her walk as instructive as her writings.

In treating of these subjects, in her books and her letters, her views appeared to have been remarkably plain and practical. She knew it was the first

Digitized by Google

business of an author to get readers; and she saw that others obtained them by striking out new and adventurous paths of research or conjecture; but her mind was so determined towards what was useful, solid, and saving upon this great topic, that trite as was the theme of practical piety, she could not forbear again going over where so many footsteps had been, that scarcely a spot of freshness or floridity remained. But as her light tread proceeded along this beaten path, a new life of green and gay variety sprung up beneath her: surprising the senses with new colours and new odours, from products bursting into being in quick and endless succession. Her powers were inexhaustible. Again and again she recurred to the same subject, and still varying the dress of her thought, where the thought was repeated, she cheated the light-minded into reading her again and again, and still again and again the pious fraud succeeded. Had she lived the life of a patriarch, it seems as if every year of that life would have been marked with some fresh expansion of Christian verity and duty.

So close was the connection between faith and practice, doctrine and duty, in the religion of Mrs. More, that many years ago she drew upon herself some strong animadversions from a pious dignitary of our church, who charged her before the public with advancing opinions on this subject, of dangerous consequence. Mrs. More had said that the Apostolic writers, after having explained the doctrines of Christianity, proceeded 'to exhibit all the

Digitized by Google

duties which grow out of them as the natural and necessary productions of such a living root.' Great fault was found with her use of the term 'necessary,' as implying, that when once the doctrines of Christianity are assented to, every thing necessary to salvation so inevitably follows, as to render moral exertion superfluous; whereas the passage was obviously susceptible of a logical or practical exposition, (as was ably shewn by Mr. Knox, her zealous and effectual vindicator,) according as it is understood to imply, that the doctrines and duties of the Christian system are so intimately connected, as to make it impossible, on rational grounds, to admit the truth of the doctrines, and deny the exigency of the duties; or, that whenever the doctrines are established as practical principles existing in the heart as a living root, they must necessarily prepare the heart of the person who has embraced them, for every thing that is just and true, honest and pure, lovely and of good report. There is not the remotest intimation of any such necessity as supersedes exertion, but a clear assertion of a strong consequence which implies or secures performance by a virtual or moral necessity.

If Mrs. More's religion was moral, her morality was altogether religious. She knew of no worth in human actions, but as they belonged to faith; which in her view was of such large dimensions as to encompass the motive and the object of whatever was good in conduct. As far as inferences may be drawn from her writings and her conversation, of the quality of her religion, it altogether excluded a speculative

Digitized by Google

faith. It might be consistent with her avowed opinions to suppose a speculative belief, but not to hold the possibility of a speculative faith. According to her view of the subject, scriptural faith was essentially practical. It was with her the root and principle of spiritual life; the very door through which sanctification enters into the soul's recesses, to concentrate its strength, spiritualize its affections, and determine its will.

It was this decided and prominent part of her character and mental constitution, which specifically distinguished her among Christians. A peculiar soundness of sentiment domesticated and tempered all her reasonings and opinions, without subduing their natural and free-born energy. There is a greatness which owes its effect in part to the sacrifice of symmetry; genius is aggrandized by its eccentricities; learning claims many privileges for itself, and wit often acknowledges none in others; the details of duties and reciprocities are not seldom trampled upon by those to whom the world's flattery concedes the charter of despising ordinary things; but Hannah More, caressed by princes and nobles, the delight of intellectual society, the centre round which so many luminaries revolved, having her name echoed from shore to shore through the civilized world, was yet a plain, home-bred, practical, and true-hearted woman; who managed so to live through a life of unusual length, that while one half of her contemporaries were drawing largely from her stores of instruction and entertainment, the other half knew her only by the solace imparted by her labours

Digitized by Google

of love; and while she was employed in the daily office of cherishing virtue, advocating merit, animating diligence, and clearing the road to happiness, she stood at the gate of mercy a humble supplicant for grace and forgiveness, and rested the success of all her endeavours on their conformity to the will of heaven.

She was a person to live with, to converse with, and to pray with. Her powers were capable of dilating or contracting their dimensions, as occasion required. Every one found it easy to deal with her in a commerce of benevolence. Her genius invited a near approach. It was great and commanding, but it was lovely and kind. Genius, in general, requires to be placed at a certain distance to produce its effect. The equilibrium of the mind is often disturbed by it,—its stability shaken, and its moral texture dissolved; and often out of this elementary disorder, forms and combinations arise, which the mastery of genius moulds and disposes at will. It claims our homage, and visits as a conqueror, to whom belongs the tribute of suit and service. But to domicile and diet with genius, is for the most part an unenviable lot. Its hearth and home are not usually the scene of comfort. In Mrs. More the colours of character were so blended, that all was consistency, and quiet, and pleasantness around her. Her wit was entirely subordinate to her good nature, and her great qualities did homage to her little graces. Her companions were sheltered from her brilliance by the shade of her humility.

Her manners were unostentatious and uncon-

Digitized by Google

strained; and although she could not but be sensible that she was always in all companies a principal object of attention, this consciousness produced in her neither reserve nor effort. She had the art of saying and communicating much, without seeming to engross a larger share of the conversation than others; and as she could afford better than most, to throw away her opportunities of excelling, it was one of the exercises of her skill in which she took most pleasure, to draw forth the capabilities of retiring merit, to give confidence to the timorous, ease to the embarrassed, and its full credit to common sense. It was the prerogative of her superiority, to maintain the fundamental rights of social equality, by the equal distribution of her kind attentions.

Her friends were often astonished at the candour and good humour with which she listened to criticisms on her works. What was accomplished with so little labour, was never so fondly cherished by her, as to become a subject of fretful anxiety: those who pointed out defects, or repetitions, or redundancies in her compositions, were always considered by her as giving proof of their kind feelings towards her. And as to those who treated her with severity, she was too conscious of the careless rapidity with which she generally worked, to be offended at that which she had taken so little pains to avert; or to be wounded by the sharp animadversions which her own salutary censures naturally provoked. It is true that the homage of the world attended her throughout her life, with little inter-

Digitized by Google

ruption, but then it is equally true, that homage is not the nurse of contentedness, nor fame and success the usual preservatives of a patient spirit, and a gentle temper.

No exemptions or immunities of genius were claimed by her. In her dress she was very neat and decorous, but very plain and frugal. A great enemy to singularity and artifice, but especially to the artifice of seeming to despise art, as far as it was called for by the infirmities of our condition, and the duty of reciprocal respect. She was, however, so little taken with the tinsel of life, and studious decoration, that what she often said of herself has been confirmed by the testimony of those who knew her longest and best, that she never wore a jewel or trinket, or any adjunct to her dress, of the merely ornamental kind, in her whole life, though much of that life was spent in the society of the great and splendid.

A very distinguishing part of her character was her 'consideration,' a word not yet perhaps of abstract and special force enough to designate a particular virtue, but to which Mrs. More had attached a sort of technical meaning, by declaring a half-intention of writing a treatise upon what she called 'the law of consideration.' Taking it, however, in her own sense, as expressing an anxiety to carry oneself in one's daily intercourse, especially with inferiors, and in the common matters of life, so as to be the author of as little unnecessary uneasiness, trouble, or inconvenience as possible in any supposed case, she may be said to have practised

Digitized by Google

it herself to perfection. She would suffer considerable privations, rather than allow her wants to harass others, and would often express a dread of appearing to her servants to be regardless of the trouble she was giving them. She carried, indeed, this little morality to a remarkable extent. She never rang a bell without asking herself why, and when doubtful whether she had rung or not, would wait a considerable time, to avoid the suspicion of impatience.

Her thoughts were always on the business before her, nor was anything too small for her attention, if it affected the feelings, or comfort, or interests of the meanest about her. She had no aberrations or fits of absence to require the apology of wit, or to favour its effect on weak judgments. She despised all shapes of affectation; but the affectation of absence of mind, as indicating abstraction of thought, she considered as the lowest of those little cheats which we are hourly passing upon each other.

A cultivated relish for rural scenery was one of her distinctions, and so great was her delight in the disposition of her garden and grounds, that she would sometimes say that Providence had consulted her good by disabling her, during the greatest part of the year, from exposing herself to the air, as there was danger, had it been otherwise, of her allowing this strong propensity to absorb too large a portion of her time. Akin to this innocent relish was the gaiety with which she entered into the happiness of young children, who were seldom introduced to her without receiving some advice from her, conveyed

Digitized by Google

in so pleasing a form as to engage their attention, and impress their memories.

It was always, however, the foible of her mind to lean too much towards indulgence, the predominance of which propensity was sometimes productive of consequences injurious to her quiet, and laid her open to much disappointment from ingratitude. Her laxity in this respect was not however accompanied by any disregard of order and regularity. When in health she was punctiliously exact in the economy of her household; in observing rules, and times and seasons; and more especially in the dispensation of her charities, and the discharge of all her pecuniary obligations.

She composed with remarkable rapidity, seldom reforming or retouching her sentences; and the same ability and habit appeared in all her transactions, small or great; her promptitude in business being stimulated by her anxiety to save others from inconvenience or disappointment. Similar motives induced her to arrange her papers and accounts with minute exactness. Common sense, and business-like habits, prevented the balance of her mind from being ever disturbed by the exercitations of thought, or her excursions into the regions of taste or imagination.

The energy of her mind in carrying into execution any purpose which had been adopted after sufficient consideration was very remarkable. In conformity with this part of her character, her plan was, in any new resolution which involved the exercise of self-

Digitized by Google

denial, to contend with the most difficult part of the undertaking first, after which, she used to say, she found the remaining sacrifices comparatively easy to be submitted to. On this principle having resolved to desist from going to the theatre about the time her play of 'Percy' was revived, she made *that* the immediate occasion for carrying her new resolution into practice. Mrs. Siddons was then at the height of her glory, and was to act the part of the heroine of the tragedy, a character which she was said to exhibit with remarkable success; and Mrs. Hannah More was in the midst of a brilliant society of friends and admirers, who all attended the representation; but here she was determined to make her first stand against this particular temptation, and to break the spell of the enchantment while standing in the centre of the magic circle.

Another anecdote will show the same principle brought into exercise on a very different occasion. As her limited income began to be sensibly diminished at one time by her travelling expences, she determined to perform her journeys in stage coaches; and in order to overcome at once every obstacle that pride might interpose, she resolved to pay a visit to a nobleman, on which she was about to set out, in one of these vehicles; which, as there was a public road through the park, set her down at the door of the mansion. She has more than once described her conflicting sensations when his Lordship, proceeding through a line of servants in rich liveries, came to hand her out of her conveyance,

Digitized by Google

—a conveyance at that time much less used than at present, by persons of high respectability. Thus it was the policy of this able tactician to commence her operations by a decisive blow, whereby the main strength of the opposing force was at once broken and dispersed, and her victory made easy and secure.

Those who lived much with her, pronounced her to be a person most easy to be lived with. None of those little petty peevishnesses with which some are so fond of spicing their intercourse and their friendships, were played off in her commerce with her friends or dependents. As she was scrupulous of giving offence, so she suspected none of intending it towards herself. She lived in an immunity from quarrels, and above the need of explanation. Her passage through life was that of a vessel on the bosom of a lake, with its canvass spread to catch the breeze, that whispered benisons as it bore it along to its quiet haven.

That she was very sensible to human praise cannot be denied, but neither can it be denied that she was prompt to praise others, and had an alacrity in pointing out the merits of contemporary writers. Her charity, in thinking and speaking of others, ran sometimes into excess: it was the charity that "hopeth all things," but it was carried so far as sometimes to confound the distinctions of character and actions. She had the finest tact in distinguishing and appreciating in the abstract, but her good nature and sensibility to kindness suspended the exercise of her moral discrimination in some instances wherein wit courted her favour, and waited upon her genius.

Digitized by Google

Beyond the limits which have been expressly propounded in the written word as essential articles of belief, she knew that there was an area in which sincere Christians may expatiate at some *distance* from each other, without any hostile separation or substantial *difference*. She knew that a religion of general laws, which lays little stress on modes of opinion, and precise observances, in comparison with the service of the heart and a sound trust in the revealed plan of redeeming mercy—admitted of some variety in the particular application of it to the conscience, and even as to the extent of its practical requirements in the different circumstances of its professors; and to the farthest bound of this reasonable latitude she always carried her tolerance and her charity, if not her friendship and affection; but in the earlier part of her life, when her views of the sanctity of the gospel dispensation were only in the first stage of their advancement, she certainly allowed herself what may be called a free intercourse with those whose wit, or reputation for wit, formed their chief, or perhaps their only recommendation.

It is on such a subject a painful employment to particularize, but the long and animated correspondence carried on between Hannah More and Horace Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford, seems to require some explanation, and perhaps apology.

Premising that the letters of Mr. Walpole to Mrs. More were always restricted in sentiment and expression to the decorum which politeness and respect towards a female of so much worth and dignity demanded, it is but truth to say, that the

Digitized by Google

general conversation, correspondence, and avowed principles of that nobleman, were such as to throw him out of the circle of Christian fellowship. It had been well if that pretender to good epistolary writing had erred only in supposing it to consist in a vacant vivacity of expression, the disdain of propriety, grace, and grammar, and a triumphant neglect of those rules of decent circumspection which, in unprivileged cases, it is customary to regard. Such mistakes imply only the union of defective judgment with blunted sensibilities; but it could belong only to a vicious constitution of mind to mistake vulgarity for vigour, and blasphemy for wit; to introduce religion only for the purpose of insulting it; to scatter abroad the scandals of private history, and the profligate gossip of the great; to make, in short, whatever is serious, or tender, or lovely in life, the perpetual theme of a flippant and heartless banter.

Had Lord Orford lived a few years longer he must have given up 'holy Hannah,' as he was accustomed to call her, or have given up his own affectations and follies, and cast all his egotism and profanity at her feet. The wand of the necromancer must have been broken; and the fascinations of his false wit have retired before the bright ascendant of her pure and prevailing superiority. She was soaring, about the time of his decease, into an element into which his wings of gossamer could never have borne him.

As she advanced in age and wisdom, and with a prayerful policy kept closer to God, and at a

Digitized by Google

greater distance from worldly connections, she drew around her the best and wisest of her contemporaries: many of whom have come before the reader in the course of the correspondence in which she engaged during the latter half of her life. Hardly an individual distinguished for learning, virtue, or piety, during this period, was a stranger to her merit, or without a participation in her interests and her objects. Such influence possessed by a retired female, during many years confined to her chamber, and constrained to pass much of her time on the couch of sickness and pain, while a series of strange occurrences were shaking the world out of its sober senses, and indisposing it to be governed by the lessons of practical prudence, was a fact so striking and peculiar that none can help acknowledging its testimony to the force of truth, when it goes forth in the demonstration of that power which the word of wisdom imparts.

Of her zeal in the cause of the Bible and Missionary societies, and her warm interest in the progress of the Slave question, as it struggled through its various stages, so much has already transpired in the correspondence which has been produced, that nothing more need be said to exhibit this shining side of her character. It may be enough to say that she had her right hand on every engine that was at work for the enlargement of human happiness. Her heart and head were always busy in the great commerce of time with eternity. To bring christianity into the intercourse of life, was the great aim of all her best efforts. She

Digitized by Google

lived emphatically and gloriously for *others*; for *herself* humbly, simply, and sparingly; and while her name was noised abroad and repeated wherever genius and virtue were respected, she was passing her time in her tranquil retreat,—in privacy and prayer, and peace; discoursing with her pious friends, and with the scenery around her.

Of the works of her pen, we may in truth aver that they have raised for her a monument which can never fail to remind her country of what it owes her. They are, for the most part, elevated above criticism by the noble purposes to which they were devoted, and by the decisive suffrages of the moral public. Her biography, however, would be considered defective if it did not bring her entire character before the world. There was hardly a period of her life which was not stamped with her intelligence. From her infantine days, books were her playthings, and her first discoveries were their own reward. The conscious capacity of doing good and making happy, seemed to possess her earliest thoughts, and to prompt her first wishes and efforts. That, setting out in such a course, and excited by the anticipations and predictions of all around her, she should set her first foot upon life's open stage without art or enthusiasm, and with neither singularity of deportment nor conceit of superiority,—that she should carry with her the same consistency and sobriety of character when her powers expanded,—and terminate her brilliant career with a composure which infirmities could not disturb, and a beneficence which age could not contract,—

Digitized by Google

are truths which those who admire excellence will delight in contemplating, and those who love their country will, especially in its present crisis, desire to see displayed and detailed with fidelity.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

It is not intended, because it would serve no good purpose, to treat of the merits of *all* Mrs. More's productions, nor to introduce in the exact order of their publication, those which will be made the subject of remark. Those of her works which were written with the same design, or belong to the same class of composition, may be properly taken into consideration together.

In her early days, when her imagination was the faculty most in exercise, poetry appears to have excited the first essays of her genius; and before she was eighteen years old (1762), her little work, called 'a Search after Happiness,' which she styled 'a Pastoral Drama,' was given to the public. It was by no means a specimen, or an earnest of her poetical powers; but it had the merit of being on a par with the purpose for which it was designed, —'to furnish a substitute,' as she states in a few words prefixed to the performance, by way of preface, 'for the very improper custom which

Digitized by Google

then prevailed, of allowing plays, and those not always of the purest kind, to be acted by young ladies in boarding schools; and to afford them an innocent, and, perhaps, not altogether unuseful amusement, in the exercise of recitation.'

If young ladies must have plays, or need the exercise of recitation, there could not well have been devised a more harmless contribution to their amusement. A visit of four young females, whose erring apprehensions of what was good for them had involved them in vanity and vexation, to the retreat of a virtuous lady, who with her two daughters had renounced the world, and fixed herself in a secluded spot, where her sanctity and benevolence invested her with a sort of oracular authority, in order to be guided by her into the way which leads to peace and contentment, was not a subject to kindle the fervours of poetry, but was well adapted to convey instruction in a pleasing form to the capacities of those for whose use it was designed; and that intention was well carried into effect. The versification is smooth, and the sentiments pure, correct, and exalted.

About the year 1783, Mrs. More gave to the world her 'Sacred Dramas,' in which her flight was far above the level of her first immature essays; but her flight was into a region too still and sacred for dramatic effect. The subjects were 'Moses in the Bulrushes,' 'David and Goliah,' 'Belshazzar and Daniel.' All very interestingly and beautifully narrated in the inspired volume; and on that account the less open to any modern

Digitized by Google

effort of experimental poetry. Besides which it seems doubtful whether those consecrated subjects with which truth is so essentially connected, will admit of that room and space in which poetic invention delights to expatiate. The drama especially depends for its effect upon its success in imposing its fabrications on the mind with the strongest semblance of reality: and in this object it must be very liable to fail when the truth is in such near neighbourhood, or rather, I would say, so palpably and solemnly impressed upon the mind, as to break all the spells of fiction, and disperse the creations of fancy. Nor will scriptural story supply the materials of pathetic interest. In transactions in which the hand of infinite wisdom is visibly and specially operative in directing and controlling the process, human agency sinks into insignificance, and all the great inequalities which place man in striking contrast with himself, are laid level before the awful supremacy of transcendental power. The anxiety of suspense, the flutter of conjecture, the surprise of discovery, must be absent from the plot. The developement of passion, the tumults of undisciplined nature, and even the freedom of adventurous language, must be put under a decorous restraint. These are subjects, in short, which will neither admit into them the peripetia of the Greek tragedies, nor the mysteries which wait the developement of our modern drama. They are too awful for scenic exhibition,—too near us for poetic illusion,—and too simple and solemn for sudden and desultory emotion. These were difficulties in

Digitized by Google

the way of the poetess; and to these may be added the constraining consideration of the character and proprieties of the age and sex of those for whom these compositions were principally, if not altogether designed—young females in the progress of their education. Yet, notwithstanding these opposing circumstances, the 'Sacred Dramas,' if they do not present a specimen of the ideal world, in which genius exercises its great prerogatives, and rears its royal standard, may still afford that practical ground on which innocence may tread securely, and on which the ways of pleasantness and the paths of peace are authentically traced, and furnished with directories from sources of unerring instruction. These compositions are full of wise thoughts powerfully and gracefully expressed, replete with virtuous lore, and rich in the maxims of sacred truth.

The 'Sacred Dramas' have been noticed immediately after the 'Search after Happiness,' as having been written in the same spirit, and for the same didactic ends. But it is believed that the tragedies of 'Percy' and 'Fatal Falsehood' were both given to the public about two years before the 'Sacred Dramas.' Her mind seemed unable to wander far from the 'courts of the Lord's house,' without a sort of self-rebuke which sent her back to her pre-engagement in the service of the soul, and the great and catholic work of moral beneficence. But as if to set forth the value of those talents which were soon to be devoted to the greatest ends of philanthrophy, she made a display of them in

Digitized by Google

two tragedies which for the pathos of sentiment, the exhibition of contending passions, and especially the grace of appropriate diction, have not been often excelled in modern poetry. Dramatic poets, in their search after the models and specimens of the disorderly and tumultuous affections, have too frequently found them in the conscious recesses of their own minds, but Hannah More had to fetch them from a distance from her own sound and healthful interior. The force, however, of her commanding genius made the muse attend her with her bowl and dagger, and all the forms and materials of tragic distress and perturbation.

There is a defect, perhaps, in the plot of 'Percy.' The violence done by the father to the heart and affections of the daughter, by compelling her to marry Douglas, after being betrothed to Percy, is so great, that the slight provocation given him, when on a hunting expedition on the borders of Northumberland, by some of the servants of Percy, the lord of that domain, affords rather too weak an apology, even in those sensitive days of feuds and family resentments, to account for so sudden a transition, and so tyrannical an exercise of parental authority. Neither can the obedience of the daughter to the commands even of a parent, when involving so much perfidy and cruelty, be excused on the plea of duty; far less be properly made to shine as a virtue.

Percy, the beloved object of the ill-used Elwina, returns from the holy war, covered with glory, and finds the unhappy Elwina the wife of his inveterate enemy. Douglas, who had suspected the pre-

Digitized by Google

engagement of his wife's affections, and whose fierce disposition had been much excited by the failure of his endeavours to produce in his wife any higher sentiment than respectful obedience, is carried to the extreme of jealous fury by the appearance of Percy at the castle; and thence the drama proceeds by rapid steps to its terrible catastrophe, which involves in a common destruction, all the principal parties to the distressful story.

The passions of love, jealousy, and revenge produce all their natural tumult in the bosom of the proud and furious Scot; and the description and developement of his turbulent character, partially subdued by the softer passions, is managed and conducted through all its progressive stages to its sanguinary result, with so correct an adherence to nature, thus darkened and disfigured, that the drama hardly affords a finer instance of bold and exact delineation. The moral impression is no less successfully kept in view. Meanwhile, the beautiful and insulated form of virtue rises majestically above these stormy elements in the person of Elwina, and comports with the skill and discernment of one who was a mistress of the art of representing female loveliness in the purest conception of the character. The much exercised mind of the heroine having been carried through its successive trials, and violent concussions, to its ultimate limit of patient endurance, is at length exhibited to us in the state in which incoherence and absurdity either mar the dignity of sorrow, or mark the consummation of suffering; exhibit either an

Digitized by Google

artificial assemblage of unconnected ideas, or the broken remains of an understanding in ruins. The distraction of Elwina has more of the characteristics of grief in this its greatest aggravation, with less of the distortion of senseless raving, than will be easily found in dramatic poetry. It is a short and transient representation, winding up the heart-rending catastrophe without waste of words or wearisome expansion, and is dispatched, as indeed are all the images and creations of this brilliant writer, with a sort of aerial lightness, and felicitous forbearance.

Respecting the two other pieces of Mrs. More's dramatic composition, 'Fatal Falsehood, and 'The Inflexible Captive,' the editor feels he has neither room nor right to trouble the reader with any remarks. It may suffice to say, that they both contain specimens of pathos, sentiment, and dramatic skill worthy of the author. But regard to truth extorts the confession, that in the plays of Mrs. More, which were acted on the public stage, there are passages in which concession was made (how was it to be avoided?) to the demands of an audience which looks only to be pleased or affected, through whatever medium such effects are to be produced. Some of the images pass the bounds of strict purity, and some trench too evidently on sacred ground by a scriptural style of expression on occasions ill-suited to such imitation. That what is here meant may not be misunderstood, and with a desire to protest against all meddling with Scripture, unless for "instruction in righteousness,"

Digitized by Google

or purposes of holy illustration, an instance shall be produced from the last-mentioned drama, of the fault to which allusion has been made.

Enter EMMELINA *distracted.*

Off, off! I will have way! Ye shall not hold me,
I come to seek my Lord; is he not here?
Tell me, ye Virgins, have ye seen my Love?
Or know ye where his flocks repose at noon? &c.

Other passages might, perhaps, be shewn, to which similar objections might be made, (for at the period of Mrs. More's life in which she stood in a literary connexion with the stage, religion neither in her mind, nor in the character of its professors in general, was what it afterwards appeared in her teaching and her example) but any further remarks are rendered unnecessary by the beautiful preface which the authoress prefixed to her plays in the general edition of her works; in which, with an elegance of diction and correctness of thought no where surpassed,—she enters into the dangerous tendency of dramatic exhibitions. Nothing could more strikingly evince the candour of this excellent lady's mind, and its Christian progression and improvement, than the reason given by her for allowing her dramatic productions to be published just as they were written;—that she might ground on such publication her sentiments on the general tendency of the drama, and by including in her view her own compositions, might involve herself in the general object of her own animadversions.

Digitized by Google

Such a sacrifice at the Christian's altar was calculated to go up as the incense of prayer to Him who listens only to the plea of the self-accuser.

Very imperfect justice at human hands would be rendered to her whom it is most desirable at this hour to present to her country, and especially to her sex, in her own proper moral attitude, were this preface to her tragedies not to be anxiously recommended to the perusal of all, but particularly of the young, and most of all of her own sex, who will therein recognize their danger from exposure to the influence of false principles and unsanctified sentiments. Being one of Mrs. More's most finished and decisive vindications of Christian morality on a topic of great practical concern, its importance seems to warrant the introduction of the following extracts:

'I have never perused any of those treatises, excellent as some of them are said to be, which pious divines have written against the pernicious tendency of theatrical entertainments. The convictions of my mind have arisen solely from experience and observation. I shall not, therefore, go over the well-trodden ground of those who have inveighed, with too much justice, against the immoral lives of many stage professors, allowing always for some very honourable exceptions. I shall not remark on the gross and palpable corruptions of those plays which are obviously written with an open disregard to all purity and virtue; nor shall I attempt to consider whether any and what material advantage would arise to the vain and the dissipated,

Digitized by Google

were they to exclude the theatre from its turn in their indiscriminate round of promiscuous pleasure. But I would coolly and respectfully address a few words to those many worthy and conscientious persons, who would not perhaps so early and incautiously expose their youthful offspring to the temptations of this amusement, if they themselves could be brought to see and feel the existence of its dangers.

'The question, then, which with great deference I would propose, is not whether those who risk every thing may not risk this also; but whether the more correct and considerate Christian might not find it worth while to consider whether the amusement in question be entirely compatible with his avowed character? whether it be altogether consistent with the clearer views of one who professes to live in the sure and certain hope of that immortality which is brought to light by the Gospel?

'For however weighty the arguments in favour of the superior *rationality* of plays may be found in the scale, when a rational being puts one amusement in the balance against another;—however fairly he may oppose the stage to other diversions, as being more adapted to a man of sense;—yet this, perhaps, will not quite vindicate it in the opinion of the more scrupulous Christian, who will not allow himself to think that of two evils *either* may be chosen. *His* amusements must be blameless as well as decorous; safe as well as rational; moral as well as intellectual. They must have

Digitized by Google

nothing in them which may be likely to excite any of the tempers which it is his daily task to subdue; any of the passions which it his constant business to keep in order. *His* chosen amusements must not deliberately add to "the weight" which he is commanded "to lay aside;" they should not irritate the "besetting sin" against which he is struggling: they should not obstruct that "spiritual-mindedness" which he is told "is life and peace;" they should not inflame that "lust of the flesh, that lust of the eye, and that pride of life," which he is forbidden to gratify. A religious person, who occasionally indulges in an amusement not consonant to his general views and pursuits, inconceivably increases his own difficulties, by whetting tastes, and exciting appetites, which it will cause him so much work to counteract, as will greatly overbalance, in a conscientious mind, the short and trivial enjoyment. I speak now on the mere question of pleasure. Nay, the more keen his relish for the amusement, the more exquisite his discernment of the beauties of composition, or the graces of action may be, the more prudent he may perhaps find it to deny himself the gratification which is enjoyed at the slightest hazard of his higher interests: a gratification which to him will be the more dangerous in proportion as it is more enjoyed.

'A Christian in our days is seldom called in his ordinary course to great and signal sacrifices, to very striking and very ostensible renunciations; but he is daily called to a quiet, uniform, constant

Digitized by Google

series of self-denial in small things. A dangerous and bewitching, especially if it be not a disreputable, amusement, may perhaps have a just place among those sacrifices: and if he be really in earnest, he will not think it too much to renounce such petty enjoyments, were it only from the single consideration that it is well to seize every little occasion which occurs of evidencing to himself that he is constantly on the watch; and of proving to the world, that in small things as well as in great he is a follower of *Him who 'pleased not himself.'*

'Little, unobserved, and unostentatious abstinences are among the silent deeds of his daily warfare. And whoever brings himself to exercise this habitual self-denial, even in doubtful cases, will soon learn, from happy experience, that in many instances abstinence is much more easily practised than temperance. There is in this case no excited sensibility to allay; there is no occasional remorse to be quieted; there is no lost ground to be recovered, no difficult backing out, only to get again to the same place where we were before. This observation adopted into practice might, it is presumed, effectually abolish the qualifying language of many of the mere *sober* frequenters of the theatre, 'that they go but *seldom*, and never but to a *good play*.' We give these moderate and discreet persons all due praise for comparative sobriety; but while they *go at all*, the principle is the same; they sanction, by going sometimes, a diversion which is not to be defended on strict Christian principles. Indeed their acknowledging that it should be but

Digitized by Google

sparingly frequented, probably arises from a conviction that it is not *quite* right.

'I have already remarked, that it is not the object of this address to pursue the usual track of attacking *bad* plays, of which the more prudent and virtuous seldom vindicate the principle, though they do not always scrupulously avoid attending the exhibition: I impose rather on myself the unpopular task of animadverting on the dangerous effects of those which come under the description of *good* plays; for from those chiefly arises the danger, if danger there be, to good people.

'Now, with all the allowed superiority justly ascribed to pieces of a better cast, it does not seem to be a complete justification of the amusement, that the play in question is more chaste in the sentiment, more pure in the expression, and more moral in the tendency than those which are avowedly objectionable; though I readily concede all the degrees of distinction, and very important they are, between such compositions and those of the opposite character. But the point for which I am contending is of another and a distinct nature; namely, that there will, generally speaking, still remain, even in Tragedies otherwise the most unexceptionable,—provided they are sufficiently impassioned to produce a powerful effect on the feelings, and have spirit enough to deserve to become popular—there will still remain an essential radical defect. What I insist on is, that there almost inevitably runs through the whole web of the tragic drama, for to this least blameable half of stage composition I

Digitized by Google

confine my remarks, (against comedy still stronger objections may be urged,) a prominent thread of false principle. It is generally the leading object of the poet to erect a standard of *honour*, in direct opposition to the standard of *Christianity*. And this is not done subordinately, incidentally, occasionally; but worldly honour is the very soul, and spirit, and life-giving principle of the drama. Honour is the religion of tragedy. It is her moral and political law. Its dictates form her institutes. Fear and shame are the capital crimes in her code. Against these, all the eloquence of her most powerful pleaders; against these, her penal statutes, pistol, sword, and poison, are in full force. Injured honour can only be vindicated at the point of the sword; the stains of injured reputation can only be washed out in blood. Love, jealousy, hatred, ambition, pride, revenge, are too often elevated into the rank of splendid virtues, and form a dazzling system of worldly morality, in direct contradiction to the spirit of that religion whose characteristics are "charity, meekness, peaceableness, long-suffering, gentleness, forgiveness." "The fruits of the Spirit" and the *fruits of the stage*, if the parallel were followed up, as it might easily be, would perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as human imagination could conceive.

'I by no means pretend to assert that religion is excluded from tragedies: it is often incidentally introduced; and many a period is beautifully turned, and many a moral is exquisitely pointed, with the finest sentiments of piety. But the single grains

Digitized by Google

of this counteracting principle scattered up and down the piece, do not extend their antiseptic property in a sufficient degree to preserve from corruption the body of a work, the general spirit and leading tempers of which, as was said above, are evidently not drawn from a religion, the very essence of which consists in "casting down high imaginations:" while, on the other hand, the leaven of the predominating evil secretly works and insinuates itself, till the whole mass becomes impregnated by the pervading principle. Now, if the directing principle be unsound, the virtues growing out of it will be unsound also; and no subordinate merit, no collateral excellences, no incidental morality can operate with effectual potency against an evil which is of prime and fundamental force and energy, and which forms the very essence of the work.

'A learned and witty friend, who thought differently on this subject, once asked me if I went so far as to think it necessary to try the merit of a song or a play by the Ten Commandments? To this may we not venture to answer, that neither a song nor a play should at least contain any thing *hostile* to the Ten Commandments: that if harmless merriment be not expected to *advance* religion, we must take care that it do not *oppose* it; that if we concede that our amusements are not expected to make us better than we are, ought we not to take care that they do not make us worse than they find us? Whatever pleasantry of idea, whatever gaiety of sentiment, whatever airiness of ex-

Digitized by Google

pression we innocently admit, should we not with jealousy watch against any unsoundness in the general principle, any mischief in the prevailing tendency?

'We cannot be too often reminded, that we are to an inconceivable degree the creatures of habit. Our tempers are not principally governed, nor our characters formed, by single marked actions; nor is the colour of our lives often determined by detached and prominent circumstances; but the character is gradually moulded by a series of seemingly insignificant, but constantly recurring, practices, which, incorporated into our habits, become part of ourselves.

'Now as these lesser habits, if they take a wrong direction, silently and imperceptibly eat out the very heart and life of vigorous virtue, they will be almost more sedulously watched by those who are careful to keep their consciences tenderly alive to the perception of sin, however they may elude the attention of ordinary Christians, than actions which deter by bold and decided evil.

When it is recollected how many young men pick up their habits of thinking and their notions of morality from the playhouse, it is not, perhaps, going too far to suspect, that the principles and examples exhibited on the stage may contribute in their full measure and proportion towards supplying a sort of regular aliment to the appetite (how dreadfully increased!) for duelling, and even suicide. For if religion teaches, and experience proves, the immense importance to our tempers

Digitized by Google

and morals of a regular attendance on public worship, which attendance is only required of us one day in a week; and if it be considered how much the heart and mind of the attentive hearer become gradually imbued with the principles they hear delivered on these stated though unfrequent attendances; who, that knows any thing of the nature of the human heart, can help seeing how much more deep and lasting will be the impression likely to be made by a far more frequent attendance at those places where sentiments of a directly contrary tendency are exhibited: exhibited, too, with every addition which can charm the imagination and captivate the senses. Once in a week, it may be, young minds are braced by the invigorating principles of a strict and self-denying religion: on the intermediate nights their good resolutions, if such they have made, are melted down with all that can relax the soul, and dispose it to yield to the temptations against which it was the object of the Sunday's lecture to guard and fortify it. In the one case, there is every thing held out which can inflame or soothe corrupt nature, in opposition to those precepts which, in the other case, were directed to subdue it. And this one grand and important difference between the two cases should never be overlooked, that religious instruction applied to the human heart, is seed sown in an uncultivated soil, where much is to be cleared, to be broken up, and to be rooted out, before good fruit will be produced; whereas the theatrical seed, by lighting on the fertile soil prepared by nature for the congenial

Digitized by Google

implantation, is likely to shoot deep, spread wide, and bring forth fruit in abundance.

'But to drop all metaphor.—They are told—and from whose mouth do they hear it? that "blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, and the peacemakers." Will not these, and such like humbling propositions, delivered one day in seven only, in all the sober and beautiful simplicity of our church, with all the force of truth indeed, but with all its plainness also, be more than counterbalanced by the splendid and much more frequent recurrence of the nightly exhibition, whose precise object it too often is, not only to preach, but to personify doctrines in diametrical and studied opposition to poverty of spirit, purity, meekness, forbearance, and forgiveness? Doctrines, not simply expressed, as those of the Sunday are, in the naked form of axioms, principles, and precepts, but realised, embodied, made alive, furnished with organs, clothed, decorated, brought into sprightly discourse, into interesting action; enforced with all the energy of passion, adorned with all the graces of language, and exhibited with every aid of emphatical delivery, and every attraction of appropriate gesture. To such a complicated temptation is it wise, studiously, to expose frail and erring creatures? Is not the conflict too severe? Is not the competition too unequal?

'It is pleaded by the advocates for church music, that the organ and its vocal accompaniments assist devotion, by enlisting the senses on the side of religion; and it is justly pleaded as an argument in

Digitized by Google

favour of both, that the affections may fairly and properly derive every honest aid from any thing which helps to draw them off from the world to God. But is it not equally true, that the same species of assistance, in a wrong direction, will produce an equally forcible effect in its way, and at least equally contribute in drawing off the soul from God to the world? I do not presume to say that the injury will be inevitable, much less that it will be irretrievable; but I dare repeat that it is exposing feeble virtue to a powerful temptation, and to a hazard so great, that were the same reason applied to any worldly subject, it would be thought a folly to venture on any undertaking in which the chances against our coming off unhurt were so obviously against us. Besides, if we may pursue the doctrine of chances a little further, it is at best playing a most unprofitable game, where, if we could even be sure that nothing would be lost, it is clear to demonstration that nothing *can* be gained; so that the certain risk is not even counterbalanced by the possible success.

'Even in those plays in which the principles which false honour teaches are neither professedly inculcated nor vindicated; nay, where, moreover, the practices above alluded to, and especially the practice of duelling, are even reprobated in the progress of the piece; yet the hero who has been reprieved from sin during four acts by the sage remonstrance of some interfering friend, or the imperious power of beauty,—beauty, which to a stage hero is that restraining or impelling power which law, or

Digitized by Google

conscience, or Scripture, is to other men,—in the conclusion, where the intrigue is dexterously completed, when the passion is worked up to its *acme*, and the valedictory scene is so near at hand that it becomes inconvenient to the poet that his impetuosity should be any longer restrained; seasonably winds up the drama by stabbing either his worst enemy or his best benefactor, or, as it still more frequently happens, himself; and notwithstanding this criminal catastrophe, this same hero has been exhibited through all the preceding scenes, as such a combination of perfections; his behaviour has been so brave and so generous, (and bravery and generosity are two qualities which the world boldly stakes against both tables of the decalogue,) that the youthful spectator is too much tempted to consider as venial, the sudden and unpremeditated crime to which the unresisted impulse of the moment may have driven so accomplished a character. A little tame tag of morality, set to a few musical periods by the unimpassioned friend, is borne down, absorbed, lost, in the impetuous, but too engaging character of the feeling, fiery hero: a character, the errors of which are now consummated by an act of murder, so affectingly managed, that censure is swallowed up in pity, and the murderer is absolved by the weeping auditory, who are ready, if not to justify the crime, yet to vindicate the criminal. The drowsy moral antidote at the close, slowly attempts to creep after the poison of the piece,—but it creeps in vain; it can never expel that which it can never reach; for one stroke

Digitized by Google

of feeling, one natural expression of the passions, be the principle right or wrong, carries away the affections of the auditor beyond any poet's force of reasoning to control.'

We will now pass on to her other poetical productions, glancing at each of those which have attracted general attention as cursorily as the respect due to them will allow.

The 'Reflections of King Hezekiah' in his last sickness, must not go without a tribute. It is a short effusion, containing lines worthy to be compared with the best of those with which the great imitator of Juvenal has made his original address us in English. As a vindication of this remark, will the reader accept the following specimen.

'What can I then expect from length of days?
More wealth, more wisdom, pleasure, health, or praise?
More pleasure! Hope not that, deluded King!
For when did age increase of pleasure bring?
Is health of years prolonged the common boast?
And dear-earned fame, is it not cheaply lost?
More wisdom! that indeed were happiness;
That were a wish a King might well confess.
But when did wisdom covet length of days,
Or seek its bliss in pleasure, wealth, or praise?
No,—wisdom views with an indifferent eye
All finite joys, all blessings born to die.
The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
Compell'd to starve at an unreal feast:
A spark, which upward tends by nature's force;
A stream diverted from its parent source:
A drop dissevered from the boundless sea,
A moment parted from eternity.'

In her poem on *Sensibility*, the line of discrimination between the true and false, was traced with

Digitized by Google

the finest touch, and nicest precision. Mrs. Grenville had written her well-known Ode on *Indifference*,—a quality which Mrs. More was desirous of taking down from its marble pedestal, and transferring its honours to a rightly-constituted 'Sensibility.' In this fine poem, sensibility is presented to us as a motive to action, designed to impel us in a course of virtuous and beneficial exertion. To expend a resource of so much moral supply and stimulating power in vain emotion, idle sympathy, or fictitious distress, was considered by Mrs. More as a diversion of a blessing from its true intention; and with this view of the subject, she has, with great judgment and graphic force, brought before us the genuine quality in an almost tangible form, and in its practical bearings on life and its realities. The mind whose strings have too much tension, misses its object by shooting beyond it. Mistaking excess for excellence, over-wrought sensibility loses the relish of what is simple, wise, and good; nor deems anything great, or interesting, but what is exaggerated, untangible, or unattainable. It travels in state along the road of life, without regarding its ordinary details; regulating its course by a fanciful rule, which puts its value and usefulness at a speculative distance.

Mrs. More has, with great success, extricated the true from the specious kind, and furnished such tests as, if properly attended to, would go far towards securing us on the one hand from becoming the dupes of a counterfeit resemblance, and on the other from blending characters and qualities,

Digitized by Google

standing wide of each other, in a common suspicion. We dismiss these remarks with a few lines of this poem, to justify the commendation above bestowed upon it.

'Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
Unprompted moral! sudden sense of right!
Perception exquisite! fair virtue's seed!
Thou quick precursor of the lib'ral deed!
Thou hasty conscience! reason's blushing morn!
Instinctive kindness e'er reflection's born!
Prompt sense of equity! to thee belongs
The swift redress of unexamined wrongs;
Eager to serve, the cause perhaps untried,
But always apt to choose the suffering side;
To those who know thee not, no words can paint,
And those who know thee, know all words are faint.
She does not feel thy power who boasts thy flame,
And rounds her every period with thy name;
Nor she who vents her disproportioned sighs
With pining Lesbia, when her sparrow dies;
Nor she who melts when hapless Shore expires,
While real misery unrelieved retires;
Who thinks feigned sorrows all her tears deserve,
And weeps o'er Werter, while her children starve.
As words are but the external marks to tell,
The fair ideas in the mind that dwell,
And only are of things the outward sign,
And not the things themselves they but define;
So exclamations, tender tones, fond tears,
And all the graceful drapery feeling wears;
These are her garb, not her: they but express
Her form, her semblance, her appropriate dress;
And these fair marks, reluctant I relate,—
These lovely symbols may be counterfeit.
There are who fill with brilliant plaints the page,
If a poor linnet meet the gunner's rage;
There are who for a dying fawn deplore,
As if friend, parent, country, were no more;
Who boast, quick rapture trembling in their eye,
If from the spider's snare they snatch a fly;
There are whose well sung plaints each breast inflame,
And break all hearts—but his from whom they came.

Digitized by Google

He scorning life's low duties to attend,
Writes odes on friendship while he cheats his friend;
Of gaols and punishments he grieves to hear,
And pensions prisoned virtue with a tear,
While unpaid bills his creditor presents,
And ruined innocence his crime laments;
O Love Divine! Sole source of charity!
More dear one genuine deed performed for thee,
Than all the periods PENDING e'er could turn,—
Than all thy touching page, perverted STERNE.'

From this poem of feeling and wit, the transition is not sudden to one of wit and feeling. Such was the little production of her pen, which in allusion to the well-known appellation, (how derived remains in learned obscurity,) given to female scholars, she called 'The Bas Bleu.' It is a sprightly portraiture of what she considered to be the right constitution and character of social conversation, and deserves to rank among our best didactical compositions. It has upon it a vivacious image of that society of gay and graceful conversers which at Mrs. Montagu's, or Mrs. Vesey's, or Mr. Garrick's, seemed to give wings to time, and yet to place at a distance its solemn termination. A society, however, of which Hannah More made so considerable a part, could not be wholly without its proper counterpoise of thought and reflection. In this little poem the concern which the heart should have in all profitable conversation is admirably illustrated; and if that which gives it its proper scope, and connects it essentially with the great end and purpose of our being, is not, and perhaps could not, be brought distinctly and prominently into view, all that makes

Digitized by Google

it the harmonizing medium of a happy interchange of thought, the provocative of playful and sudden humour, and the dissipation of busy and official inquietude, was exhibited in great perfection as characteristic of these privileged assemblies.

It was in these meetings, and about the period of Mrs. More's coming annually to London, that the pleasures of refined conversation were most successfully cultivated; certainly not always, as has before been said, directed to its noblest end; but it was in its character, sterling, honourable, benevolent, and correct! It was altogether at an immeasurable moral distance from those detestable colleges of vice, frivolity, and flattery, which about the same time received the homage of Paris, and the continent in general; where no union or real sympathy of sentiment was to be found, save that only which subsists between wit and wickedness.

In the savage gaiety which reigned in their orgies scarcely one of the qualities which Hannah More has celebrated in her 'Bas Bleu' could have been recognized, or perhaps understood.

The elevation at which the sentiments of Mrs. More stood above the ordinary conception of good company and convivial entertainment, may be apprehended from the following specimen among others of equal value in the poem.

'What lively pleasure to divine
The thought implied, the hinted line;
To feel allusion's artful force,
And trace the image to its source:
Quick memory blends her scatter'd rays,
'Till fancy kindles at the blaze;

Digitized by Google

The works of ages start to view,
And ancient wit elicits new.
But wit and parts if thus we praise,
What nobler altars should we raise,
Those sacrifices could we see,
Which wit, oh virtue! makes to thee.
At once the rising thought to dash,
To quench at once the bursting flash!
The shining mischief to subdue,
And lose the praise and pleasure too!
Tho' Venus' self, could you detect her,
Imbuing with her richest nectar
The thought unchaste—to check that thought,
To spurn a fame so dearly bought;
This is high principle's controul,
This is true continence of soul!
Blush, heroes! at your cheap renown,
A vanquish'd realm, a plundered town!
Your conquests were to gain a name,
This conquest triumphs over fame.'

The metrical tale of 'Florio,' in which the silly imitation of vanities and follies bordering on depravity, adopted by a man of good principles and right feelings, in deference to rules settled by the senseless arbiters of fashion, is laid aside with disgust when virtue and good sense, in alliance with female loveliness, makes apparent to him the absurdity and danger of his aberrations, is told with great vivacity, grace, and vigour. The poem brings into juxta position correct principle and selfish levity, the majesty of moral truth, and the meanness of the world's maxims, with a brilliancy of contrast hardly to be found in any of the stories in which instruction wins us in the disguise of entertainment. If the stupidity of fashionable life could be put out of countenance, it might well blush to see its deformity reflected in this clear and faithful mirror.

Digitized by Google

There are passages in this poem of great elegance and force, of which the reader will perhaps admit the following to be a sample.

'Exhausted Florio, at the age
When youth should rush on glory's stage,
When life should open fresh and new,
And ardent hope her schemes pursue,—
Of youthful gaiety bereft,
Had scarce an unbroached pleasure left;
He found already to his cost
The shining gloss of life was lost,
And pleasure was so coy a prude,
She fled the more, the more pursued;
Or if o'ertaken and caress'd,
He loath'd and left her when possess'd.
But Florio knew the world; *that* science
Sets sense and learning at defiance;
He thought the world to him was known,
Whereas he only knew the *town*.
In men this blunder still you find,
All think their little set, mankind.
Though high renown the youth had gain'd,
No flagrant crimes his life had stain'd;
No tool of falsehood, slave of passion;
But spoilt by CUSTOM and the FASHION.
Though known among *a certain set*,
He did not like to be in debt;
He shudder'd at the dicer's box,
Nor thought it very heterodox
That tradesmen should be sometimes paid,
And bargains kept as well as made.
His growing credit as a sinner,
Was that he liked to spoil a dinner;
Made pleasure and made business wait,
And still by system came too late;
Yet 'twas a hopeful indication
On which to found a reputation:
Small habits, well pursued, betimes
May reach the dignity of crimes;
And who a juster claim preferr'd
Than one who always broke his word.'

Digitized by Google

To do justice to these minor poems of Mrs. More, regard must be paid to the stage at which she was then arrived in her progress towards better things. They must be judged in reference to their scope and object; and the latitude in which she then lived, of which, if we look either to the character of the times, or of the society in which she moved, we must admit the temperature to have been spiritually cold.

The 'Tale of Florio,' was however, as far as it went, very usefully corrective of habits and practices, which, if compared with crimes that cry for vengeance, may seem to be hardly sinful; but which, if placed by the side of the gospel requisitions, (and what else afford the right standard?) are seen in their true dimensions, as evils which widen the distance between God and the soul, and are the forerunners of crimes which occasion their petty beginnings to be forgotten.

It is not intended in these cursory comments, to bring forward all Mrs. More's poems in numerical order; the reader will have no such ground of complaint; but among her poetical pieces of the lighter kind, it would look like insensibility to excellence, to omit to direct attention to her little tales and tracts in verse, which are full of genius, and have had their merit decided by the best testimony it was possible for her to receive,—the eager and universal acceptance of them by those for whose edification they were intended. The 'Carpet Weavers,' 'Faith and Works,' and many others of a like kind, are specimens of pious humour,

Digitized by Google

(if the phrase may be allowed,) in easy verse, which showed the author of 'Cœlebs,' and 'Christian Morals,' to be qualified by her versatile genius, to hold converse with intellect in all its varieties, to teach wisdom in all its forms, and to bring to view all the little disorders that endanger the web of our moral texture, in their smallest beginnings and remotest consequences.

Her two poetic tales, in which she gave an early specimen of her genius in the pathos of simple narrative,—'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' and 'The Bleeding Rock,' drew much attention at the time they were produced. If they are forgotten, it is partly because innumerable competitors in the same walk have solicited, in succession, the ear of the public, each supplanting its precursor by its superior freshness; and partly, perhaps principally, because modern ears have for a considerable period been accustomed to a certain luxuriance of diction and remoteness of imagery, which indispose them to receive pleasure from the simpler structure and more natural order of the sentimental poetry of the last age. In the 'Bleeding Rock' there are many fine and well-constructed lines, and the whole poem is a good specimen of melodious versification. Perhaps 'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' has been less wronged by modern neglect.

The poem in which the vigour of her muse was most decidedly shown, was that which she composed on the black slave-trade; the whole is brilliant; and many of the passages deserve, both on account of the sentiment and poetical structure, to be enthroned

Digitized by Google

in the memory and the heart. The following lines are comprehended within this eulogy.

'O thou sad spirit, whose preposterous yoke,
The great deliverer, death, at length has broke!
Released from misery, and escaped from care,
Go meet that mercy, man denies thee here:
In thy dark home, sure refuge of the oppress'd,
The wicked vex not, and the weary rest.
And if some notions, vague and undefined,
Of future terrors have assailed thy mind;
If such thy masters have presumed to teach,
(As terrors only they are prone to preach;
For should they paint eternal mercy's reign,
Where were th' oppressor's rod, the captive's chain?)
If, then, thy troubled soul has learned to dread,
The dark unknown, thy trembling footsteps tread:
On Him, who made thee what thou art, depend;
He who withholds the means, accepts the end.
Thy mental night thy Saviour will not blame,
He died for those who never heard his name.
Nor thine the reckoning dire of light abused;
Knowledge disgraced, and liberty misused;
On thee no awful judge incensed shall sit
For parts perverted, or dishonoured wit;
When ignorance will be found the safest plea,
How many learn'd and wise shall envy thee!'

It is thus she anticipates what we have lived to witness:

'Shall Britain, where the soul of freedom reigns,
Forge chains for others she herself disdains?
Forbid it, heaven! O let the nations know
The liberty she tastes she will bestow;
Not to herself the glorious gift confined;
She spreads the blessings wide as human kind,
And scorning narrow views of time and place,
Bids all be free in earth's extended space.
What page of human annals can record
A deed so bright as human rights restored?

Digitized by Google

O may that god-like deed, that shining page
Redeem our fame, and consecrate our age,
And let this glory mark our favoured shore,
To curb false freedom, and the true restore.
'And see the cherub MERCY from above
Descending softly quits the sphere of love!
On Britain's Isle she sheds her heavenly dew,
And breathes her spirit o'er the enlighten'd few;
From soul to soul the generous influence steals,
Till every breast the soft contagion feels.
She speeds exulting to the burning shore
With the best message angels ever bore;
Hark! 'tis the note which spoke a Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high, and peace on earth!
'As the mild spirit hovers o'er the coast,
A fresher hue the withered landscapes boast;
Her healing smiles the ruined scenes repair,
And blasted nature wears a joyous air;
While she proclaims through all her spicy groves,
—Henceforth your fruits, your labours, and your loves,
All that your sires possessed, or you have sown,—
Sacred from plunder—all is now your own.'

Of her epitaphs, which were numerous, all that such poetry usually accomplishes was attained by her various muse, which seemed to shrink from no trial of her power, wherever friend or fellow-creature called for its exertion. These productions of her pen have usually as much point as those of our best epitaph-writers, with sentiments more in accordance with the principles of a pure faith.

Her 'Bible Rhymes,' her last poetical production, written when she was approaching her eightieth year, attracted comparatively but little attention. It is, however, an extraordinary performance for so trembling a pen; and when respect is had to the object contemplated, which was to allure young persons to the perusal of the Bible, by exhibiting

Digitized by Google

its contents in current and easy verse, unfolding them in their order, and assigning to each part its proper character and application, it is something to say that within the narrow circumscription of rhyming couplets in four feet metre, her genius found room to manifest its power, and adorn its subject. As a specimen has been produced from each of her larger poems, her Bible Rhymes more especially claim it at our hands, in justice to their neglected merit. She thus copies the imagery of Habakkuk:

God came from Teman; what array
Of confluent glories mark his way!
Brightness above, around was sent;
The pestilence before him went.
The skies with unknown splendours blaze,
Heaven shows his power, and earth his praise;
The everlasting mountains fled,
The rivers trembled in their bed;
Bowed the perpetual hills; the deep
Through the dark caves was heard to sweep.
His arrows fly. Lord! at thy will
Th' astonished sun and moon stand still:
The shining of thy glittering spear
Transfix the Heathen bands with fear.
One glance of thy pervading eye
Measures the earth; the nations fly
Dissolved and scattered; Cushan's tents
Burst forth in deep and loud laments;
They tremble at the distant sound,
Sudden the troops their tents surround.
Yet though Chaldea's hostile band
Pour in his hordes and spoil the land;
Yet though the fig-tree may be found
With neither fruit nor blossom crowned;
The olive and the vine decay,
And flocks and herds be torn away;
My song of praise my God shall hear,
More free, more fervent, more sincere.

Digitized by Google

Lord of my strength, my joy, my crown,
Thy boundless mercies let me own!
Thy great salvation sets me free,
I shall have all in having thee!

It is thus she speaks of the poetry of Isaiah, and of Him who is the subject of that poetry.

Here all God's attributes unite,
The gracious and the infinite:
Beyond imagination's dream,
Thy true, august, and holy theme;
All that the loftiest mind conceives,
All that the strongest faith believes,
All were too feeble to express,
God's love, his power, his holiness!
His length, his breadth, and depth, and height,
In all their wide extremes unite.

To him all Lebanon could bring
Only a worthless offering;
The waters at his bidding stand
Within the hollow of his hand;
The mountains in his scales are weighed;
The hills are in his balance laid;
Measured by his almighty hand,
The globe's a particle of sand!
Though with tremendous arm he come,
With power that strikes the nations dumb;
Centre and source of light and love,
In him we are, and live, and move.

Of her works in prose it may be said, that if their merit be estimated by what in the book-trade is called success, that merit has a testimony which few English works on subjects the most popular can boast. The eagerness with which edition after edition was absorbed by the public demand, has been alluded to in many places of the foregoing

Digitized by Google

correspondence. 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great,' her first didactic work on morals, and the 'Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World,' which soon followed, at once proclaimed her sentiments to the public, and settled her true position in society. They were produced at a time in which to decide between God and the flattering world by which she was surrounded, must have caused her something of that agony of resolution which on less solid grounds others of her sex probably experience in passing from life and its endearments into the seclusion of the cloister; a separation certainly more violent and rending, and more imposing as a spectacle of self-conquest; but when it is considered how easily the mind that has surrendered itself to impulses is thrown from one extreme to another, and transported beyond its natural temperament, we shall see perhaps less real effort in the change and transition wrought under their influence, than in that quiet renunciation of habits, associations, and friendships, and that discriminative choice between what God and what the world approves, which are the results of a humble and teachable wisdom, bowing implicitly to the will of heaven, as authentically communicated by the word of inspiration. It is indeed uphill labour,—a strong struggle against the stream, to turn the hopes, affections, and delights of the soul from their habitual tendencies, into a sober, spiritual, and self-denying course; but it is a labour and a struggle for eternal life.

Both her last-mentioned performances were very

Digitized by Google

successful and useful; but in her 'Strictures on Female Education,' she far surpassed her former doings, and took her place at once above all her contemporaries in the secret power of imparting moral truths in their most familiar and interesting forms. To those for whom it was especially intended, it is of a value to be estimated only by the worth of the soul; and happy are those parents in whose families the precepts of this admirable book have acquired their due ascendancy. They offer an excellent preservative against those aberrations of study, and that unsuitableness of occupation which force the feminine mind out of its proper orbit, and perplex life by the dislocation of its duties, and the disturbance of its proper purposes and appointments.

In that fine production of her pen, 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,' she has exemplified in the character of 'Lucilla' all her practical admonitions and all her delineations of female excellence. No writer could have moulded such a character, with thoughts so tender, and principles so firm, and with all the qualities appropriate to the sex so tempered and so balanced, but one who found the model, at least in many of its features, deposited in her own bosom.

But the beauty of the character consisted mainly in its nearness to the gospel pattern. This gave it a humility which mellowed its lustre; lowered the severity while it heightened the purity of the standard. All in the character of Lucilla that is above ordinary humanity is the bright emanation

Digitized by Google

of holiness and charity. Neither philosophy nor sentimentality impart to her any of their distinctions. Her strength lies in the consciousness of her weakness; her safety in her religious trust. Her virtue puts vice and folly to shame, not by the display of superiority, but by the speaking example of her quiet and unpretending course, which disclosed in every step and movement, some charm of unstudied propriety, some nameless grace of behaviour.

> Illam quidquid agit, quo quo vestigia flectit,
> Componit furtim, subsequiturque decor.

It is not the business of these pages to enlarge upon the merits of this or any of the works of Mrs. More, but to bring them distinctly and fairly before the reader. It will be enough, in this place, therefore, in justice to this admirable work, which, besides its pure and attractive story, exhibits the best specimen of elegant ethical dialogue to be found in any language, to direct attention to the principal figure—one of the most delicate and noble among the births of moral fiction. If brought into comparison with the 'Corinna' of Madame de Stäel, we see in them the strong characteristic differences of these two distinguished writers;—perhaps the greatest in modern times as fancy-dressers of the female character.

'Lucilla' is the true representative of feminine excellence within the legitimate range of allotted duties: the light of her example is therefore clear, serene, and constant. 'Corinna' is a figure of magical grace, but one that cannot be proposed

Digitized by Google

to the imitation of her sex, without inviting them to come out of their proper places. It is true that the character of 'Corinna' was not proposed for imitation, and the author was only pledged to consistency of delineation; but the tendency of the work was to transport the mind to the greatest distance from the knowledge of itself, and to interpose between the conscience and affections, between motives and actions, a metaphysical medium in which religion and nature, sensation and sentiment, principles and propensities, float together in mystical disorder. It is nevertheless the production of an extraordinary genius. With few features of a story, the tale is so contrived as to keep attention and expectation constantly on the stretch, and to occupy the heart and engage its sympathies in deep and continuous emotion. The reader is hurried on without a breathing interval, with his eyes for ever on 'Corinna,' overlooking a multitude of absurdities and contradictions for her sake. Till the faculty of discrimination is set free from the spell of her character, the faults of the work cannot be discerned. All is in subjection to the bright lady of the ascendant. It is not a probable character, as the world is constituted, but it is a supposable character under assumed circumstances. Having given her existence, and surrounded her with her proper atmosphere, the author stood only pledged to consistency. The character was her own to deal with as she pleased; and there is certainly something very admirable in the art by which she has contrived to merge the vanity of her principal character in the

Digitized by Google

brilliancy with which she has surrounded it. When Corinna comes forth in the panoply of her endowments, we think no more of her vanity than of that of the Roman General proceeding with his trophies in triumph to the capitol. There is a gaiety and a grace accompanying all she acts, and speaks,—a majesty in her brow, a goddess-like gait in her approach, which affects us almost supernaturally. A fatal passion seizes her: the graces and the muses gradually forsake her: the diadem drops from her temples: the incense of praise is withdrawn; a rapid dereliction of her powers lets her down to the level of common beings: she sinks into obscurity and dies a pitiable death.

The work abounds in passages and descriptions of great strength and beauty; but there are also to be found in it many of the ordinary tricks, forced coincidences, and sentimental common-places of ephemeral novels. It has no moral, no illustration of duty, no lesson or example tending to the improvement of principle or practice. Beautiful lectures are given us on the fine arts; and whatever Madame de Stäel had borrowed from the scenery, colours, and atmosphere of Italy, she has abundantly repaid by the value of her descriptions of its treasures of genius, and by the wreaths with which she has decorated afresh its monument of ancient excellence. But all the tremors and agitations which the mind suffers from this distressing tale of tumultuous sorrow, make no beneficial impression, inculcate no moral lesson, nor awaken or confirm any virtuous principle. They leave the

Digitized by Google

heart desolate; humanity, truth, and propriety sophisticated and perplexed, and vanity invested with the attractions of suffering innocence.

The 'Cœlebs' of Hannah More gives us the substance, not the sublimation of virtue—its duties rather than its sentiments—its actings rather than its energies. She never shoots beyond her mark, or suffers her imagination to invest her object with a brilliancy that perplexes her vision, or distracts her aim. Leaving to Madame de Stäel, and her German school, the virtue which flourishes upon the stock of man's natural perfectibility, or what is understood in the language of common intercourse by goodness of disposition, she derives her system of duty with great simplicity from the will of God made known in his sacred record—that record which is so far from admitting the heart to be an independent judge of morality, or recognizing its silent suffrage in favour of truth and heaven, that it finds only in that same heart a radical principle of resistance, and an anarchy of evil thoughts.

The Lucilla of Hannah More, is, like herself, thoroughly English; and if, as has been observed by Madame Necker de Saussure, in the Corinna of Madame de Stäel are shadowed out some of the extraordinary features of her own character, the heroine of Hannah More stands surely at no further distance from the amiable author of 'Cœlebs.' Madame de Stäel is only known to the editor of these pages in her character as a writer, whose soberest moods touched the borders of sentimental intoxication, and yet in whose enthusiasm there

Digitized by Google

appeared to enter a somewhat kindly mixture of tempering elements,—as a writer whose weaknesses and whose vanities were rendered incurable by being engrafted into her philosophy; who systematised what she ought to have subjugated; and blended together without the smallest regard to the various provinces of study, or the differences in the proper destination of our faculties, her feelings, her fancies, and her reasonings, in a combined and brilliant display of irregular force.

Leaving all this extravagance of feeling, and metaphysical sentimentality, it is very pleasing to pass the threshold of Mr. Stanley's house, and to listen to that varied series of animated discourse on life, its characters, and its duties, which exalts that parlour scene, not only above the schools of German sentiment, but above the proud Lyceum or the painted stoa; for who with a reasonable mind can put the tedious diatribes of heathen morality in competition with the sprightly and vigorous discrimination with which the characters in Mrs. More's dialogues carry on their amicable warfare; while in this field of courteous contention, virtue, in the person of Lucilla, sits as a sort of arbitress; her upright and clarified common sense always conducting her to the correcter side of the argument, while her modest interrogations assist and animate its course.

It was not a little creditable to her country and her contemporaries, that a work so full of plain and practical truth as 'Cœlebs,' should be so well received. It stood surrounded by the novels, the dramas, and the philosophy of the day, in most of

Digitized by Google

which the duty and the happiness of man is misrepresented and miscalculated, the steady, unyielding advocate of evangelical morals. Of this beautiful figment of her creative mind it may with truth be said, that without the aid of any degrading specimens of humanity, or scenes of profligacy, or images of impurity, or irreverent humour, or profane application of sacred words or ideas, it spread its fascination over the land, and gave to virtue at least a temporary triumph over passion, levity, and licentiousness, in their own department of gaiety and fashion.

In this, as in some of her smaller performances, Mrs. More evinced her powers of invention, and gave sufficient proof that had she chosen to employ fiction as the vehicle of instruction, her imagination would have afforded her abundant resources of that kind; but none can have attended to the testimonies borne by her life and correspondence to the habit and bias of her mind, without seeing that a certain grave decision of purpose, a serious devotion to practical and direct beneficence, an impatience in well-doing, an active and almost restless principle of philanthrophy, were the leading distinctions of her character. One great reason why she did so much was, that she was never long in determining what to do. Her life was a chapter of acts and performances with little or no preface. Circuitous means of coming at her ends were never characteristic of her operations. Having determined to attack and expose what she had observed, in her intercourse with society, to impede its advancement and interrupt its happiness, she commenced at once

Digitized by Google

an open and decided aggression upon its practical errors in religion and morals.

To the humbler classes, whose untutored and unexercised minds required to be more attracted and allured, she conveyed her instruction in little tales and stories, conceived and composed with great ability and address; but with respect to those whose intellects were better prepared by education and habit, she trusted entirely to the force of truth, in conjunction with the recommendations of a style elegant, gay, and popular. Gifted with the best dowry of the muse—a ready and creative faculty of invention; having wings as it were upon her shoulders, wherewith she might have soared, had it pleased her; she yet chóse to combat on common ground with prejudice and folly,,—attacking them where they were most entrenched, and most at their ease within the rampart of their prescriptive security.

It might seem to be a matter of vulgar enterprise to compose essays on moral duties, grounded on the gospel; and it is true, that in a general way to descant upon such subjects, is not a new undertaking; but to familiarize holy truths without lessening either their solemnity or their obligation, to demonstrate the connexion between our altars and our hearths, to show the importance of the little wheels in the complex motions of our great moral machinery, and to bring ordinary life under the Scriptural test, without rigour on the one side, or relaxation on the other, was reserved for the evangelical moderation, personal experience, and correct judgment of Hannah More.

Digitized by Google

To her three successive pieces on the great subject of Christian duties, she gave the names of 'Practical Piety,' 'Christian Morals,' and 'Moral Sketches.' With these forces she carried her crusade into those territories, which, till then, had been deemed inaccessible to the most valiant in the cause of truth; where folly fed by abundance, and appetite under false names and disguises, betray the heart, and captivate the imagination. The sophistry of the passions, the drowsiness of habitual self-indulgence, and the arts of self-imposition, are no where brought into stronger contrast with the pure precepts of gospel morality. Paths which had been trodden bare, became green again with the freshness and verdure of her observations. At every moment the reader finds himself conducted to some arresting point, some sudden opening that brings before him the multiform scenery of human life; peopled, like the picture of Cebes, with the votaries and victims of vice and vanity, but, like that pretty allegory, furnished with a directress that points to the rough ascent that leads to happiness,—happiness far greater than Cebes imagined, or Plato taught; where patient hope finds its consummation, and Christian perseverance receives its reward.

He, who professing to be a Christian, desires to know how to mix his Christianity with the daily transactions of life, without lowering its quality, will find his purpose answered by consulting the spirited and popular treatises of this faithful guide. But he will find in her a friend *severely affectionate;* he will find her in his busy scenes, crossing his path

Digitized by Google

of ambition or avarice, and in his hours of gaiety, dashing from his lips the cup of intoxication. The old may learn from her their best economy of the twilight that remains to them, and the young may see their day-dreams of delusive pleasure dispersed by her powerful disenchantments.

The religion of Mrs. More, as it presents itself in these volumes, was sufficiently high and warm to draw from nominal Christians the charge of extravagance, and sufficiently sober and subdued to lie quiet within the circumscription of our established church; so practical and simple as to dissatisfy the disputer and the theorist, and so strenuous in the maintenance of vital doctrines, as to pass for illiberal with the champions of religious freedom. She was a true daughter of our national Sion; and it was her happiness to depart, before the clouds which now envelop it had darkened the horizon. No living person would have felt more genuine sorrow in witnessing the depression of Protestantism; and no one, had the approaching crisis been contemporary with her strength, would have laboured more ardently or more efficiently in the consecrated cause with respect to which so much blood-bought experience is threatened to be thrown away.

We gather from her expressions concerning our national church, in various parts of her writings and correspondence, that she looked upon its constitutional establishment as an integral portion of our polity, and as wrought into the frame and substance of our laws. Neither did any entertain a higher estimation of the spirituality of its offices,

Digitized by Google

and the soundness of its tenets. She honoured it as the sanctuary best fitted upon earth to be the representative of the temple not made with hands;—as the safest guide to prayer and godly communion,—the most authentic pattern of holiness,—the truest depository of the faith once delivered to the saints; but then she considered that although we have an assurance that against the Church of Christ "the gates of hell shall not prevail," we have no such assurance of the perpetual safety of the Church of England. In her view of this great subject, Christ's Church had the guarantee of God's word, but the Church of England rested, under God, upon the character of its clergy and the zeal of its members: not on celebrations, or festivals, or acclamations, or on any public demonstrations of attachment; no, nor on societies formed for its protection, though these have their value and importance; nor even on the claims to veneration conferred on it by the wisdom of its founders, and the blood of its martyrs; but on its working efficiency,—on the sinews of a laborious ministry,—on the pure dispensation of its patronage,—on its being, to use her own words and allusions, the leaven which leavens the whole mass of our institutions and manners, and on its being in its constitution that kind of arrangement which Divine wisdom may be expected to sanction, in order to the continuance of Christianity upon earth.

The object of her 'Practical Piety' was to exhibit Christianity as an internal principle. The whole work is an illustration of the religion of the

Digitized by Google

heart, as distinguished from one of mere forms and observances.

This inwardly operative character of religion it was her object to shew forth to the reader who is searching after truth; and for the sake of those who are not to be won without the attractions of manner, she has bestowed on her argument a sparkling and graceful style. She has shewn religion to be, in its proper character, an operative principle, 'from which the affections and faculties receive a new impulse; by which the dark understanding is illuminated, the rebellious will subdued, the irregular desires corrected, the judgment informed, the imagination chastised, the inclination sanctified, our hopes and fears directed to their proper objects, and the love of the world transmuted into the love of God.' She represents it in short, 'as pressing all the capacities of the soul into a new service and allegiance; as giving to the whole frame and constitution of the mind a nobler bent; to its activity a sublimer aim; to its vacillating desires a fixed object; to its vagrant purposes a settled home.' This she properly calls the religion of the heart;—the proper central seat of its existence, whence it gives out its supplies of life and warmth to animate and exalt the whole being of the Christian.

Having thus fixed the throne of religion in the heart, she spreads its government over the entire conduct; and expands it into a system of morals, in which a diligent discharge of the duties of social life is combined with those high devotional attainments on which she lays the foundation of what she

Digitized by Google

intends by the term 'Practical Piety,' implying a holy alliance of right actions with right affections. 'Religion,' says this practical expounder of it, 'was not intended for the exceptions out of the general state of the world, but for the world at large; for beings active, busy, restless; whose *activity* it diverts into its proper channels; whose busy spirits it directs to the common good; whose restlessness—indicating the unsatisfactoriness of all they find on earth, it points to a higher destination. God is the fountain from which all the streams of goodness flow; the centre from which all the streams of blessedness diverge. The love of God, as it is the source of every right action and feeling, so it is the only principle which necessarily involves the love of our fellow-creatures. As man, we do not love man. We may without this principle relieve his distresses, but we do not bear his burdens. We may promote his fortune, but we do not forgive his offences. We may not see him want without pain, but we can see him sin without emotion. We cannot hear of a beggar perishing without horror; but we can without concern witness an acquaintance dying without repentance. We must participate something of the Divine nature, before we can really love the human.'

The more common *mistakes* too, concerning religion, are in this work admirably exposed. She sets before us in vivid contrast 'the visionary professors who shoot beyond the mark, and the moralists who fall short of it; the men who are wise above what is written, and the men who are wise below it; those who lose themselves in the clouds by stretching their

Digitized by Google

faculties beyond their appointed limits; and those who grovel in the dust from the inertness of their capacities; those who build spiritual castles in the air, instead of erecting them on holy ground; and those who lay their foundation in the sand instead of resting it on the rock of ages.'

Equally judicious and happily expressed are her comments on those characters 'whose religion consists in a sturdy defence of what they call orthodoxy, —an attendance on public worship, and a general decency of behaviour; who are far from rejecting faith or holiness, but are much troubled with excessive apprehensions of believing or doing too much; who consider religion as a point which they have attained by their regular observances, and conclude that nothing further is required of them but to maintain the point they have reached, by a repetition of the same observances;—frugal Christians, who are afraid of nothing so much as of superfluity in their love, and supererogation in their obedience; who weigh in the scales of scrupulous exactness, the duties which of hard necessity must be done, against those which, without the same risk, they think may be omitted; compounding for a larger indulgence by the relinquishment of a smaller; giving up, through fear, a trivial gratification to which they are less inclined, and snatching doubtingly as an equivalent at one they like better.

'To know Christianity only in its external forms, and its internal dissatisfactions; its superficial appearances without, and its disquieting apprehensions within; to be desirous of standing well with the

Digitized by Google

world as a Christian, and to be unsupported by a well-founded Christian hope; to live in the dread of being called an enthusiast, and in secret consciousness of falling short of it; to be conformed to the world's view of Christianity, without being transformed by the renewing of the mind, is a state not of pleasure, but of penalty; not of conquest, but of hopeless conflict; not of ingenuous love, but of tormenting fear;—it is to know religion only as a captive in a foreign land knows the country in which he lives a prisoner. He hears from the cheerful natives of its beauties, but is himself ignorant of every thing beyond his own gloomy limits.'

This beautiful work contains a chapter on what the writer calls 'Periodical Religion,' in which are represented to the life those fits and starts of levity and repentance, renunciation and repetition, which not unfrequently checquer the course and character of a man devoted to the world, and at the same time sensible of the jeopardy of his soul. His struggle to reconcile what will never coalesce; his warmth in the cause of religion as opposed to infidelity, and his comparatively small regard to it as it stands opposed to our appetites and habits; his professed anxiety about the worship of God, and his practical renunciation of his service; are among the portraitures which the authoress has drawn with the greatest felicity and fidelity.

No less successful have been the efforts of her pen in describing the proper and prudential conduct of the pious man in his intercourse with the irreligious. Her thoughts on this subject are full of sound

Digitized by Google

discretion, and the principles of scriptural charity. 'He,' says this sober-minded directress, 'who advocates the sacred cause of Christianity, should be aware of fancying that his being religious will atone for his being disagreeable. Let him not persuade himself that he has been serving God, when he has only been gratifying his own resentment; when by a fiery defence he has been prejudicing the cause which he might, perhaps, have advanced by temperate argument, and persuasive mildness.'

In a subsequent chapter on the duty of watchfulness, some admonitions are offered to the clergy on the perils of popularity in preaching, which well deserve their attention, as well as that of their hearers.

On 'Sensibility to eternal things,' the richness of her remarks is very striking. A comparison between the drowsy Sabbaths of the man of business, and the animation which accompanies him in his secular concerns; between the dull decencies and shadowy forms of his religious observances, and the solid realities, and cheerful activities of his worldly life, is drawn with great acuteness, and the truest strokes of moral painting.

Many passages full of instruction might be produced from the chapters on 'Happy deaths,' and 'The sufferings of good men.' Let the reader allow his attention to be specially engaged by the valuable observations of the writer on the ill-success of good men in their most virtuous undertakings, and their balancing compensations, contained in the last-mentioned chapter; and further allow himself to be asked, when he shall have finished the perusal, if he

Digitized by Google

is a scholar, whether among all that has been bequeathed us by Plato's divine philosophy, or the reasonings of him who brought wisdom from heaven to dwell among men, or among the lessons of the best of the 'budge doctors of the stoic fur,' he has been conducted to nobler or juster views of the dignity of virtue, the beauty of truth, and the soul's immortal interests. Let him, ere he proceeds in his progress through the same admirable chapter, pause at and ponder well that instructive passage on the happiness of him who not only has recourse to God in his last hour and "in the time of the great water-floods," but had long and diligently sought him in the calm: who had pursued God's favour when he might have enjoyed the favour of the world; who did not wait for the evil day to seek the supreme good; who did not defer his meditations on heavenly things to the disconsolate hour, when earth had nothing to offer him; but who can cheerfully associate religion with the former days of felicity, when with every thing before him out of which to choose, he chose God.

In the succeeding publication, entitled 'Christian Morals,' Mrs. More resumed the subject of the former work under a new appellation, and proved herself capable of renewing its graces and attractions, by immersing it afresh in the colours of heaven. She had but to wave her wand, and the barriers that protected folly and impiety from the irruption of truth were levelled, and a passage was again opened for religion to enter and declare its errand. This fresh expansion and decoration of

Digitized by Google

Christian verities and duties was as successful as its predecessor in exciting attention, and deserved it no less by the value of its arguments and illustrations. It was thickly sown with spirited, acute, and useful observation, and made, perhaps, some steps in advance upon its predecessor, in purity and correctness of language.

As the biographer of this great lady, I feel myself engaged in a public duty to make her Christian Morality speak again to the people of this land; to restore a walking faith to its due preference above a talking faith; and to present religion as a life no less than a light to this professing and wordy generation. Could religion in the practical form in which we find it in this essay on 'Christian Morals' be brought more into honour and use amongst us, it would no longer be chargeable with disturbing the proper and peaceful economy of families and communities: parents and children, masters and servants, sovereigns and subjects, magistrates and people, would fall back into their relations and places—the foundations of the moral and social world would be less out of course—improvement might go on without dislocation, transposition, or derangement; and the sobriety of the old school would throw its modest shade over an age advanced in knowledge, perhaps, but an age of dangerous conceit, and besotted with the 'new wine' of its own inventions.

The last of her three great works on Morals, which was produced in the 75th year of her age, (1819), answered to the title given to it of 'Moral

Digitized by Google

Sketches.' It was more descriptive and characteristical, than either of the former works. The moral world was becoming every year more and more broken into classes of opposite principles and pursuits. As religion had come out more into prominence, opposite speculations and dogmas had become more contrasted and contentious. It is true that complexional, physical, and social pecularities, had been reduced to great uniformity among the different grades of well-educated society by the frequency and facility of intercourse between the capital and the provinces, and the general circulation of wealth and knowledge; but the same general assimilation of manners and studies which had tended so much to level distinctions once prescriptively established and acknowledged, had given birth and occasion to a great diversity and collision of opinions, sentiments, and tenets. A sort of intercommonage on the great plain of literature and science, gave to every one licence and room to range at will, and pick up as he was minded, his theories and notions; so that, as was natural in this desultory state of things, where every one was more anxious to display his competency, than to increase his store, and the disciple was becoming above his master, the domains of intellect and thought teemed with an irregular and luxuriant growth of extravagant dogmas and dangerous fancies. But the most injurious characteristic of this new order of things, was the pride of discovery, and the propensity to change, which, under the alluring form of liberality, made an assault upon first principles, and unsettled the foundations of experience. To a

Digitized by Google

mind watchful, like that of Hannah More, of every turn and change, advance or declension, in the moral course of the world, and of its gain or loss in those interests which are weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, this disturbance of land-marks and entire emancipation of opinion and principle, were subjects of much inquietude; and kept her pen perpetually employed to overtake, and to direct, if not to arrest, so forced and precipitate a march of the public mind.

Always disposed to meditate with concern upon the state of her country, in relation to its best interests, she could not without great emotion, contemplate the varied scene of character, which lay spread before her; on the one side the votaries of vice, the slaves of ambition, and the murderers of quiet,—on the other side, the few who were living in consistency, charity, and peace; and the vast intervening space between these extremities, filled with ambiguous worth, and undecided principle,—the vacillating, the vain, the superficial, and the self-satisfied. With her 'measuring reed' in her hand, she divided this moral territory into its proper cantonments, in which she placed her different classes; some promoting the education of the poor, some charging themselves with the discipline of prisons, a proportion employed in the diffusion of the gospel; and beyond those fair enclosures, a boundless region with all its masses of population, in which the workers of mischief were too successfully labouring to cover the surface with a poisonous vegetation; while in a spacious neutral ground, she placed her community of borderers, maintaining a hollow alliance, and an

Digitized by Google

accommodating intercourse with two communities in direct opposition to each other—the world's devotees, and the subjects of the Saviour's kingdom.

Her various descriptions, exposures, and corrections of these classes and divisions, in which her country lay distributed before her, compose the aggregate of those valuable last lessons which she gave to the world, under the title of 'Moral Sketches.' Though the varieties of the human character can never be said to unite in a pleasing effect, like a natural scene, diversified by the rugged and the smooth, by woods and precipices, by torrents and rills, by rocky projections and green pastures, yet these sketches of characters and manners, under the hand of this able delineator, present to view a scene in which the parts are so disposed, as to place virtue in advantageous relief, and to render whatever is estimable and amiable in life more lovely by opposition.

When it is considered that the authoress had now arrived at her seventy-fifth year, this lively and perspicacious product of her intellect must be regarded with admiration. Nor should it be forgotten, that just before the publication of this work, she had lost her last surviving sister. The happy sisterhood had followed each other at little distances, to the shore of that heavenly country, to which they had long been directing their course, and Hannah, now standing alone, smitten, and tempest-worn, still held her high and commanding station,—a solitary sea-mark to direct the voyagers on this sea of trouble to the harbour of security and peace.

Digitized by Google

This last of Mrs. More's considerable performances had the same strong feature which distinguished all her didactic productions—it was thoroughly English. A hearty, home-bred vein of sentiment tempered the brilliancy of her diction, and the gaiety of her remarks;—in thought and expression always sterling, and natural. Antigallican in every feeling, and yet rivalling the best French authors in delicacy and point, this farewell production of her pen touches all the principles of morality most exposed to peril from the reigning habits and practices of society.

She bestows no small censure on the propensity of the English towards French journies and French manners, which threatened, in her sober view of consequences, to terminate in a French indifference to decorous restraints, to serious duties, and to saving belief. All her observations on this subject bear testimony to the virtuous feeling and plain English properties of her mind. But her account of the coteries of Paris, and of the 'bad characters' which presided over those 'good societies,' presents to the view of her countrymen and women, one of the best drawn pictures in existence of those most disgusting and detestable colleges of debauchery and atheism, where in the midst of levity, vanity, and false refinement, the seed was nourished and developed, of that poisonous tree whose deadly shade has interposed itself between God and man, producing a fruit of deceptious exterior, but of bitterer flavour than the apples of Sodom. She has laid open the radical principles of

Digitized by Google

those godless confederacies. She has touched the vermin with the spear of Ithuriel, and made them start up in their true dimensions. She saw them in their beginnings, and she felt them in their tendencies. She lived to see them spread their contagious influence throughout the moral and intellectual world, to enervate the springs of wholesome government, and to undermine the prescriptive foundations of peace and subordination; to issue, probably,—but she was happily removed before that evil day,—in the tyranny of the many, without a settled will, or a principle of permanence—without the warrant of religion, or the wisdom of experience.

It would be well for our country, if its attention could be awakened at this precarious moment, when the thinking faculty is in such full operation, and so subject to the misguidance of flattering and fallacious instruction, to the admonitions of this gentle and judicious disciplinarian, who in this wise volume has exhibited the pure constituents of what she calls 'England's best hope.'

In one short chapter will be found a legacy from Hannah More to the aristocracy of these realms, as valuable as their ancestorial property; and if any feeling and clear-sighted parent, having this world's abundance, can come from the perusal of this portion of the work without seeing how this abundance is best to be improved, secured, and transmitted, he must be either too proud to be taught, or deficient in just perceptions.

The advantages of the poor over the rich in the article of a religious education, are no where better

Digitized by Google

set forth, because it is not in the compass of words more strikingly to show, that of two educations, the one going *with*, and the other *against* the stream of gospel precepts, the former must come out in the sequel superior to the latter, in general and substantial intellectual enlargement, and finally in moral power. It is not easy to answer the questions of this wise and virtuous woman, who desires to be informed why 'the poor should monopolize our benevolence? Why the rich should in this instance be so disinterested? Why the same charity should not be extended to the children of the opulent and the great? Why the son of the nobleman should not share the advantage now bestowed on the children of his servant, of his workmen, and of the poorest of his neighbours? Why Christian instruction should not be made a prominent article in the education of those who are to govern and to legislate, as well as of those who are to work and to serve? Why these most important beings (most important by their influence and example) should be the only beings in this enlightened country whose immortal interests are neglected?' If these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered, let us hear the fact and the rebuke with which the propounder has closed the paragraph. 'If we have begun to instruct the poor with a view to check the spirit of insubordination, that spirit requires little less suppression in our own families. In all ranks it is the prevailing evil of the present day. The diminished obedience of children to parents, of servants to masters, of subjects to sovereigns, all spring from

Digitized by Google

one common root—an abatement of reverence for the authority of God.'

'From his Bible, and from his Bible only,' says Hannah More, speaking to the opulent parent concerning the education of his child, 'let him draw his sense of those principles,—of that standard by which he will hereafter be judged; and be careful ever to distinguish in his mind between the worldly morality which he may learn from the multitude, and that Christian holiness which is the dictate of the Scriptures, and of the Scriptures alone. Teach him to discover there—he cannot discover it too soon—that it is not a set of proverbial moral maxims, a few random good actions, decorous and inoffensive good manners, the effect of natural feeling, of fashion, of custom, of regard to health, of desire of reputation, that will make a truly valuable character. This is not to be acquired by certain popular virtues, or rather fractions of virtues; for there is no integral virtue where there is no real religion. Pleasing manners will attract popular regard, and worldly motives will produce popular actions; but genuine virtue proceeds only from Christian principles. The one is efflorescence, the other is fruit.'

Those females who are desirous of consulting Mrs. More's moral works for the direction of their conduct, and they cannot consult a safer guide, or a better practical expounder of scriptural rules and injunctions, must bear to be told of domestic duties, and of the inexpediency and danger of deserting home, and its various appropriate and important

Digitized by Google

offices, for the sake of playing a more conspicuous part in the field of diffusive benevolence. They will be reminded that the community at large is but an aggregation of homes, of hearths, of families, and of neighbourhoods. But Mrs. More is always tender, always cautious in her remarks upon her own sex; and wherever a right principle, or pious intention is at the bottom of any practice, she treats it with the respect which is due to the motive; —with a holy dread of damping virtuous zeal, and a Christian fear of being misunderstood.

Her chapters on the two classes of religious professors whom she distinguishes by the appellation of 'Phraseologists,' and 'Borderers,' are striking specimens of her accurate knowledge of the moral state of society. Her portraitures of each of these descriptions of character are drawn from the life, and have the originality and freshness of personal observation. Those who fold up religion in a technical phraseology, and distinguish themselves as a body by certain reciprocal signs of religious intelligence; who adopt a dialect as the test of orthodoxy, and recognize no saving faith out of the pale of their vocabulary, may learn from Mrs. More's strictures on 'Phraseologists,' that religion has no necessary connexion with terms, nor any other tie that binds together the members of its confraternity in holy concord, but an union of heart in the love of God, and a sympathy of trust in the great sacrifice.

The chapter on the 'Borderers' pursues hypocrisy through its turnings and windings in the recesses

Digitized by Google

of the heart. Decision, consistency, and Christian courage are nowhere more successfully contrasted with the meanness of those faithless compromises by which the friendship of the world, and of those who have renounced it, is sought at the same time to be preserved.

The general religionist and the decorous sensualist have their respective portraits very distinctly and accurately drawn by the same animated pen; but no part of the work has given her a higher title to the gratitude of her readers, than that which has been assigned to the subject of prayer. It is not easy, one would think, to read this part of the volume with reasonable attention, and remain contentedly a nominal Christian.

The subject of faith and works, so often handled, and so often perplexed, she has contrived to elucidate and refresh with the lights and colours of her scripture-taught intelligence. The close affinity by which they are united, the necessity of the one to the other, the nature of that necessity, and their mutual bearings, have received an illustration from her pen, calculated to compose the disputes upon this subject, wherever nothing sustains the controversy beyond the zeal of opposite convictions. To settle faith in its priority, and to make the love of God in the soul of man, the spring-head of all his good desires and actions, has occupied the attention of the writer in the concluding part of her work, and such is the solidity and beauty of this portion of the volume, that it may be said without undue or partial praise, that those parents who are desirous of founding the

Digitized by Google

moral or practical instruction of their children upon its only safe and legitimate basis, will find their object best promoted and secured, by taking Mrs. More for their guide.

It has been thought desirable to place before the reader those writings of Mrs. More which were wholly on the subject of Christian morality, in an unbroken order, but her other prose productions cannot be passed over in silence. The work entitled, 'Hints towards forming the character of a Young Princess,' has been sufficiently adverted to in the course of the foregoing correspondence, to make the reader familiar with the occasion of its publication, and the reception it met with from the high parties whom it personally interested, as well as from those who were immediately engaged in the education of the then hope of the nation. Xenophon, and Fenelon, and a numerous succession between those two graceful writers, have put before princes what seemed to them to be calculated to promote their happiness and honour; but it would be difficult to name a work in any language, which has been better imagined and more ably executed, than this of Hannah More, for suggesting to the heirs of the kingly estate, their appropriate studies and qualifications, and for pointing out to royal steps the road to real greatness.

It was the product of a mind teeming with benevolence towards her country, and it was a tribute of loyal affection towards her, on whose character that country seemed then in no small measure to depend for its future felicity and glory;—towards her whose

Digitized by Google

youth, and health, and loveliness, seemed to auspicate a long enjoyment of her splendid birthright; but who was destined to come and go like a vision, as if her appearance on this earth was only to shew the insecurity and fragility of all its pledges and expectances.

The Princess died, but the book lives, and those live to whom the book affords instruction, as applicable as it was to those for whose peculiar benefit it was intended. Perplexing changes seem rolling on, and the signs of times, new in their aspects and auguries, and indicating events lying perhaps equally out of human experience and historical analogy, call upon such as are born to high place and authority amongst us, to be prepared as much as may be for the encounter. To attempt to meet such a state of things by the ordinary methods of adulation and intrigue, intimidation or concession, would be equally vain. As in new and anomalous diseases, the healing art sees all its efforts baffled, and the last and best hope is found to rest on the simple resource of temperance, and a prudent regimen;—so will no other art be found more capable of resisting that organized principle of destruction, which, under deceptive names, has enlisted the animal strength of the abused multitude in opposition to all safe and steady government, than the art of exhibiting to a country, loyal, perhaps, at heart, the awful pattern of a pious sovereign, practising with a princely grace, the virtues of private life. There are none of royal birth who may not learn this art on its truest principles from the precepts of Hannah

Digitized by Google

More. Taught by her lessons, the heir of a throne may learn that while in the tawdry display of ephemeral splendour, every great capitalist in the land may be the prince's rival, there is an 'unbought grace of life,' lying in the simple duties of a Christian, in which he has by birth and station, a power of excelling others, if not in substance, at least in influence and effect. He may learn from her that it is scarcely too strong an aphorism to say, 'Let him take care of the man, and sovereignty will take care of itself.' He may learn from her wherein consists the real security of thrones, and the moral secret of preserving empire.

It was well known that the late Princess Charlotte of Wales perused attentively the work which was composed for her benefit. This was sufficiently attested by the assurance of the Bishop to whose tuition she was intrusted, and confirmed by information which came to Mrs. More from various unquestionable sources. It was also a fact accredited by good authority, that the 'Hints' of Hannah More, was one of the last books in the hands of the young Princess. It may not be that the work had any influence on her character; but it is at least certain, that it was calculated to impress on a mind of thought and sensibility, the qualities essential to true greatness: and it is equally certain that she who read the book lived up to many of its precepts, and adopted, as far as she had opportunities, the course which Mrs. More had suggested in her valuable manual, as that which was to put her upon a par with her splendid expectations.

Digitized by Google

From the period of womanhood, and especially after her marriage, the deportment of this amiable personage was such as made every man and woman in the land feel that by her death they had lost a relation. The tie was a domestic one. There was something in the style of her sentiments and habits, that partook strongly of a period anterior to the new principles which had their origin in the fatal neology of the continent, and their developement in the revolutionary epoch of France. The old and faded English mind, with its indigenous properties and national enthusiasm, seemed to be restored in her to its original freshness and lustre. Local affections, home delights, hospitable intercourse, and charity that came into actual contact with its object, however humble, or old, or poor, were the pledges of her future character as a matron queen, and the earnest of a beneficent sway that was to rest in no small degree on its natural titles to the homage of gratitude, and the free servitude of the heart. So much womanly warmth of disposition, so much reality, so much sincere relish for what was kind and cheerful, so much heartiness of sentiment, have rarely been coupled with so many artificial accomplishments, or survived a culture so studious and elaborate.

It is not insinuated that all this was the fruit of Mrs. More's suggestions or persuasions, but it is not too much to say that such a mind was a good recipient of such advice as that which is contained in the passages here presented to the reader.

'It is of the last importance that persons of high condition should be preserved from entering on their

Digitized by Google

brilliant career with false principles, false views, and false maxims. It is of the last importance to teach them not to confound splendour with dignity, justice with success, merit with prosperity, voluptuousness with happiness, refinement in luxury with pure taste, deceit with sagacity, suspicion with penetration, prodigality with a liberal spirit, honour with Christian principle, or conscientious strictness with hypocrisy. Young persons in the pursuit of glory and celebrity are perpetually liable to take up with false way-marks: and where they have some general good intentions respecting the end, to defeat their own purpose by a misapplication of the means; so that often they err not so much through the seduction of the senses, as by accumulating false maxims into a sort of system on which they afterwards act through life.

'One of the first lessons that should be inculcated on the great is, that God has not sent us into this world to give us consummate happiness, but to train us to those habits which lead to it. High rank lays the mind open to strong temptations; the highest rank to the strongest. The seducing images of luxury and pleasure, of splendour and of homage, of power and independence, are only to be counteracted by a religious education. The world is too generally entered upon as a scene of pleasure, instead of trial. The high-born are taught to enjoy the world, at an age when they should be learning to know it; and to grasp the prize, when they should be exercising themselves for the combat. They look for the sweets of victory, when they should be

Digitized by Google

enduring the hardness of the conflict. The exalted station of the young princess, by separating her from miscellaneous society, becomes her protection from many of its maxims and practices. From the dangers of her own peculiar situation she should be guarded, by being early taught to consider power and influence, not as exempting her from the difficulties of life, or insuring to her a larger portion of its pleasures, but as engaging her in a peculiarly extended sphere of duties, and infinitely increasing the demands on her fortitude and vigilance.

'The prince who practices virtue, not only holds out a broad shelter to the virtues of others, but his example is a living law, efficacious to many who would treat written laws with contempt. The good conduct of the prince will make others virtuous, and the virtuous are always peaceable. It is the voluptuous, the prodigal, and the licentious, who are the needy—the unsettled, and the discontented;—who love change and promote disturbance. Allegiance is the fruit of sober integrity; and fidelity grows on the stock of independent honesty. As there is little public honour where there is little private principle; so there will be little private principle, at least among young persons of rank, where the throne holds out the example of a contrary conduct.

'Projects of conquest and ambition are circumscribed, and obstructed by a thousand inherent and unavoidable difficulties. They are often dependent for their success on the life of a single man, whose death, perhaps, when least expected, at once dis-

Digitized by Google

concerts them. Often they depend on what is still more uncertain—the caprice or humour of an individual. When all is thought to be successful and flourishing; when the prosperous enterprizer fancies that he is on the point of gaining the proud summit to which he has so long aspired; at once he is dashed to the ground, his laurels are blasted, and he himself only remains

'To point a moral, or adorn a tale.'

But the monarch whose nobler and more virtuous ambition tempts him to employ his superior power in promoting the internal prosperity and comforts of his subjects, is not liable to such defeats. He does not depend upon an individual. His plans are carrying on through ten thousand channels, and by ten thousand agents, who, while they are all labouring for the promotion of their several peculiar objects, are, at the same time, unconsciously performing their functions in the great machine of society. It is not, if we may change the metaphor, a single plant, perhaps an exotic, in a churlish climate, and an unwilling soil, which, raised with anxious care, a sudden frost may nip, or a sudden blight may wither; but it is the wide-spread vegetation of the meadow, which springs up in one unvaried face of verdure, beauty and utility.'

Such was the sound advice, and such the sterling precepts presented by this true lover of her country, to her country's pride and hope; and we trust the counsel was not bestowed in vain; although the

Digitized by Google

goodly bearing branch was too soon, as men consider these things, divided from the regal stem. But she did not live in vain; and among the benefits of which her brief existence was the source may be reckoned this—that it gave occasion to one of the best repertories of practical lessons for the guidance and instruction of those on whom the task of government may devolve, with all its awful responsibilities, that is to be found in any language.

Hannah More has presented the kingly character to our view, substantially majestic. She has drawn the portraiture of a prince, not in the colours and shadows of painted life, but in a style of composition and conception, answering to the solemn character of his great trust as the servant of God, and the shepherd of his people. She has shewn, too, that attachment to the Sovereign, and obedience to the laws are parts of Christianity, and that no diadem is firm on the brow of him who depends upon an allegiance not grounded on religion; and sees not that the piety of the people is his best political friend, and the only party which it is his real interest to adopt. Her indignation sharply reproves those shallow men who are for keeping the multitude amused, at whatever cost to virtue and religion. She reminds us, that to fear God and honour the king, are commandments resting upon the same authority; and that the best prince can have no permanent place in the affections of him who has no fear of God in his soul.

In all the didactic productions of Mrs. More's pen, and especially in the valuable work which has

Digitized by Google

come last under consideration, one characteristic has invariably marked her literary course, which redounds greatly to the credit of her consistency, her firmness, and her sincerity. She has gone forwards along the varied path of her moral visitations, distributing praise and reprehension without any regard to consequences affecting herself; looking fearlessly on the right hand and on the left, for the subjects of her moral animadversions; disdaining all compromise with dangerous practices, errors, or prejudices, however countenanced, patronized, or sanctioned. To this honest course is, doubtless, to be attributed much of the obloquy, misrepresentation, and malice, by which her fair fame, and pure honour have in many instances been assailed. Of many of the new opinions in politics, and of all the novelties of recent birth by which theology has been perplexed, she has manifested, whenever these subjects have fallen in her way, a decided disapprobation.

But though very distrustful of the principle and tendency of that ominous movement which appears to be going on with an impulse in which neither patriotism nor wisdom has any share; she was no favourer of the lethargic maxim, that things cannot be better than they are; but was rather of opinion that some things of general concernment were necessarily progressive, and that as a vast moral revolution was likely to be the consequence of the means in operation for the dispersion of knowledge, while the press was standing like Briareus with his hundred arms extended against

Digitized by Google

heaven, it had become necessary, in order to save the religion of the land, and all that the wise and virtuous must love and cherish, to adopt methods, and set on foot plans, of a stirring and spirited character. She thought that this was the work, not of a strong and confident, but of an awakened and alarmed religious establishment. But her main reliance seemed to rest on the increase of an efficient clergy. To them she looked as the proper guardians and instructors of the poor,—the bold expostulators with the rich,—the firm promulgators of evangelical truth,—the rural patterns of sobriety and sanctity. She thought that the mind of the country was in their keeping; and she called upon them for their supreme care of this solemn and sacred deposit.

Of her 'Essay on the Character and Practical Writings of St. Paul,' which was given to the world in the year 1815, little need be said, as it contains comparatively but little that exhibits her opinions on general topics, or on such as were connected with the signs of the times. It was, however, a work of great merit, distinguished by clearness of thought and expression, and deserving to be ranked among the best portraitures of Christian faithfulness and holiness that has been proposed to our imitation. It can, indeed, hardly be said of any one of Mrs. More's performances, that it has a higher claim to be studiously perused. The first chapter, which brings the morality of the pagan systems into contrast with that which the gospel has given us; and the second, which pre-

Digitized by Google

sents a popular view of some of the most striking evidences of our holy religion, are additions to the work of great value,—the overflowings of her wealthy mind, which like a full river, carried abundance along with it on either side of its fertilizing current. The character of the Christian hero was in good hands. She essayed to describe it with a modesty and humility of style and sentiment without which even *her* genius would have wanted an appropriate qualification for the task; and she accomplished her undertaking in a manner that has made it impossible for a wise parent not to feel the importance of directing the mind of his family towards that great example.

As Mrs. More was such a dealer in morality, and points so emphatically to the great Apostle's reprobation of that abuse of the gospel which represents its liberty as implying a freedom from moral restraint, it may be important to show what she considered to be the true character and obligation of the moral law, and what the legitimate basis on which must be founded its sanction and authority. 'We have employed,' says she, 'the term morality in compliance with common usage; but adopted in the worldly sense, it gives but an imperfect idea of the Apostle's meaning. His preceptive passages are encircled with a kind of glory; they are illuminated with a beam from heaven; they proceed from the spirit of God, and are produced by faith in Him. There is every where that beautiful intermixture of motive and action, that union of cause and effect, faith and its fruits, that uniform

Digitized by Google

balance of the principle and the produce, which render these epistles an exhaustless treasury of practical wisdom, as well as an imperishable record of divine grace. Repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, formed the substance of his testimony to all men. From the doctrine of the cross he derives all sanctity, all duty, and all consolation.'

In thus bestowing what appears to me to be the just measure of praise due to Mrs. Hannah More's publications in prose, I have not forgotten that her exuberance of mind, added to her strong persuasion of the necessity of captivating her readers by the brilliancy of her diction, betrayed her into certain errors of composition. In her efforts to attract by the allurements of style, she has sometimes adopted a drapery unsuited to the sober grace which belonged to her subject. Her liveliness of imagination, combined with her dread of being dull, has here and there got the better of her excellent judgment, and made her occasionally guilty of something like a lavish waste of decoration. Sometimes she is chargeable with clashing or incongruous metaphors, and is obscure by excess of illustration. The play of her genius sometimes sports too long with a thought, and sometimes her very power expands it into weakness; for weakness is the sure result of every endeavour to swell the natural size of a sentiment to fill out a period of artificial structure. The antithesis is very apt to seduce us into error; and

Digitized by Google

many of our best writers are found sometimes to forget that it is not by the change of terms that the effect of the antithesis is produced, but by the vivacious contrast between two branches of a sentiment appropriately expressed, and imparting colour and relief to each other. The antitheses of Mrs. More's style are in the far greater number of instances brilliant and correct; but she is not wholly guiltless of the spurious kind. Neither will I contend that she is throughout entirely free from the expletives of common-place; or deny that in some instances by less labouring to please she might have pleased more. By too studious an endeavour to avoid the recurrence of the same word, where the identical idea is again expressed, she has sometimes manifested that over minute and artificial attention to the dress of her thoughts, which rather offends than gratifies the judicious ear; but if this daughter of Sion displeases us sometimes by her bracelets, and chains, and the bravery of her tinkling ornaments, it is principally because they disguise the beauty of her native perfections, and the graces which are emphatically her own.

I now commit the life and correspondence of this Christian lady to the sentence of the great public, throughout which her name and fame may be said to have circulated. That all opinions should agree respecting the merit of one who has so often stood in strong opposition to prevailing practices, could only be expected by those who in their reliance on the power of truth, and their admiration of virtue, have forgotten the discrepancies of temper and

Digitized by Google

taste, the influence of habit upon the judgment, and the enmity of the world towards those who have lived above it. The value of this record will be variously estimated. That of her who was calumniated in her lifetime, the memory should be altogether spared, it would be enthusiasm or ignorance to expect; but to one who bore her faculties so meekly, and lived so much for the common good, I cannot but hope that even the exercise of self-denial, the defence of practical holiness, and the abdication of all hope of help but in a sacrificed Saviour, will be pardoned, even by those who hold a standard of right and wrong independent of the gospel, and find their justification in a satisfied conscience.

It has been my perilous privilege to have the task assigned me of holding out this pattern to imitation. I have attempted it with great fear of doing incomplete justice to such a character, but with an anxiety for the cause connected with that character, which in a crisis like the present throws every other consideration into comparative insignificance. I conclude my humble labour with again reminding the reader—that it is not meant to be affirmed that Hannah More was scripturally or morally perfect, but a sinning mortal, dependent on the succours of Divine grace. Neither can I be accused of having represented her works as faultless; but on the contrary, it has been admitted that their excellence is accompanied by the defects which belong to the vacillations of genius. Again I allow that there will be found in them some

Digitized by Google

redundancies of sentiment and language, some tautologies, some errors in grammar, some incongruities of allusion and illustration; and there may be some inconsistencies in reasoning; to which may be added, inadvertencies imputable to her habitual haste of composition, and her disadvantageous distance from the press. But her mistakes were, in general, such as common critics are proud to discover, and uncommon talents are prone to commit. And upon the whole it may be questioned whether any one in modern times has lived so long with less waste of existence, or written so much with less abuse of ability;—whether wisdom has been better consecrated or religion better seconded, in this our day at least, by the pure and prudent application of popular talents.

THE END.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

RETURN TO: CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
198 Main Stacks

LOAN PERIOD Home Use	1	2	3

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF C
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF C
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google